

Sight and Sound

Plus
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Beauty and beasts
Jenny Diski on
Dracula and friends
Jeanette Winterson
on wicked women
and animation

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and the western
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before Bond
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to 'Peeping Tom'
Orson Welles:
improving 'Othello'

Legends



THE AIKMAN

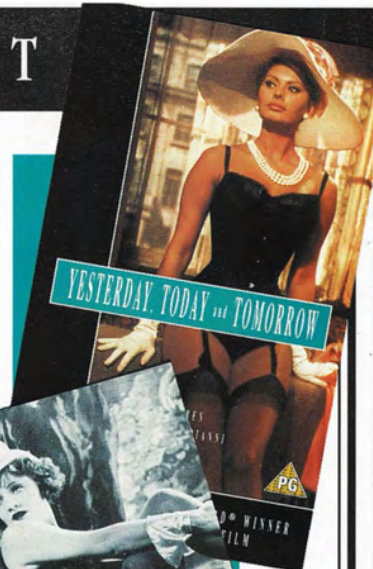
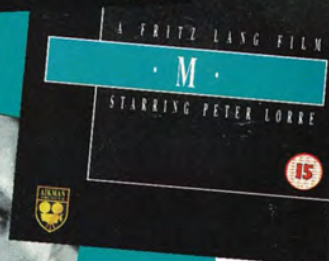


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Editor
Philip Dodd
Associate editors
Pam Cook
Richard Combs
Acting associate editor
Jill McGreal
Assistant editor
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Printer
Chase Web (St Ives plc)

Advertising sales

Mark Pearson
Hucksters Ltd
47 Leander Road
London SW2 2ND
Telephone 081 671 1351
Facsimile 081 678 7260

Business

Managing director
BFI publishing
Colin MacCabe
Publishing director
Caroline Moore
Advertising manager
Mark Pearson
Telephone 081 671 1351
Marketing assistant
Susan Law
Newsstand distribution
UMD, 1 Benwell Road
London N7 7AX
Telephone 071 700 4600
Bookshop distribution
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Sight and Sound



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Eddie Adams/Sygma

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20 October**



Welles' 'Othello': 28

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present

AS YOU LIKE IT

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE DIRECTED BY
CHRISTINE EDZARD



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Andrew Tiernan	Roger Hammond
Cate Fowler	Don Henderson
Arthur Kelly	Miriam Margolyes
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Unlawful Entry Jonathan Kaplan

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The latter days

Contributors to this issue

Roberta J. Astroff teaches at the University of Pittsburgh
Jenny Diski's novels include *Happily Ever After*
Lem Dobbs's screenplays include Soderbergh's *Kafka*
Michael E. Dyson teaches Afro-American Studies at Brown University; *Reflecting Black*, a collection of his essays, will be published in the spring
Julian Henriques is the co-author of *Changing the Subject*; his most recent film, *We the Ragamuffin*, was screened on Channel 4 in September
Philip Kemp has written a study of Alexander Mackendrick and is working on a book on Michael Balcon
Peter Keogh is film critic of the *Boston Phoenix*
Irene Kotlarz is director of the International Animation Festival
Geoffrey Macnab's *J. Arthur Rank and the British Film Industry* will be published early next year
Michael Moorcock's latest novel is *Jerusalem Commands*
Jonathan Rosenbaum is film critic of *Chicago Reader*; Peter Bogdanovich's and his catalogue of Welles' oeuvre will be published in the near future
James Saynor was deputy editor of *The Listener*
Marina Warner is a novelist and critic whose books include studies of the Virgin Mary and Joan of Arc
Jeanette Winterson is a novelist whose *Written on the Body* has recently been published

With the government's green paper on the renewal of the BBC Charter soon to be published, the corporation needs to sort out who is the official spokesperson and what is the party line. At the moment there are competing voices, with different and apparently incompatible points of view.

Does the BBC governor, who stood up at the Edinburgh Television Festival on the Sunday after Michael Grade's speech and made emollient noises about listening to what the critics say, represent the corporation? Or should we be attending to Michael Checkland, the outgoing Director General, who appeared on BBC radio and television in the week following Grade's speech to say that the BBC's appeal to the 'high ground' did not mean abandoning popular programming, but rather signalled an intent to produce *distinctive* popular and minority strands? Then again, perhaps Marmaduke Hussey, the Chairman of the BBC, and John Birt, the man born to be Director General next year, speak for the BBC? As the two principal modernisers, they appear to be happy to embrace the BBC as a high cultural ghetto, leaving all the popular (profitable, and very possibly good) programming to commerce. Unsurprisingly, they have been little short of contemptuous of Michael Grade's speech and of its argument. As if to signal their distance from the old order, and their distaste for it, neither chose to make their response to Grade known via the BBC, but instead spoke through the columns of *The Sunday Times*, in much the same way that Mrs Thatcher used to avoid using the 'nationalised' British Rail and NHS.

It is a pity that what is clearly an internal struggle over the future direction of the corporation has ensured that a cool reflection on Michael Grade's speech has not been forthcoming from any senior manager within the BBC. For while Grade's speech was rousing – like any call to arms – it was less than persuasive as an account of the causes of the war or what position on the battlefield the BBC ought to take up.

Where Grade's speech was strong was in its withering attack on management style and practice. Where it was weak, and it is difficult

to account for this, since as Chief Executive of Channel 4 Grade has felt these pressures himself, was in its failure to recognise that within the broadcasting environment of the 90s, 80s solutions won't work, however attractive they may appear to a beleaguered and diminishing workforce. (It is one of the strange ironies of the present situation that television, which was so eager to turn the cameras on declining industries such as coal and steel in the 70s, hasn't the heart to turn the camera on itself as the BBC 'slims' down its workforce.)

So what changes have there been in the 90s that any discussion of the BBC must recognise? The usual suspects in the account of why public-service television is under threat are satellite and cable television. And there is no doubt that the victory of BSkyB in securing sole rights to broadcast live Premier League football is a sign that in certain key traditional 'national' areas, satellite television is now an important force. With the possibility of up to six satellite stations being launched in the next year and the modest visibility of cable stations, things are only going to become more competitive.

There is also the general fact that people are watching less television (as reported in a recent issue of the *PSI's* invaluable *Cultural Trends*), and that the home is now the resting place for a range of new entertainment technologies (from videos to game machines and now laser discs) that compete with television for the audience's attention. What are the grounds for the licence fee to fund a general public-service television channel in this new world order?

We know that the Reithian definition of public-service broadcasting – which assumed, and in part tried to create, a single national culture – is no longer pertinent, so what is the new defence? Unfortunately Michael Grade's speech didn't offer one, and on the basis of the leaks from inside the BBC, the Birt/Hussey line is far from impressive. The tragedy of the moment is that one is being asked to choose between Michael Grade's honourable old-time religion and the high-minded hucksterism of Birt and Hussey. The truth is neither will do.

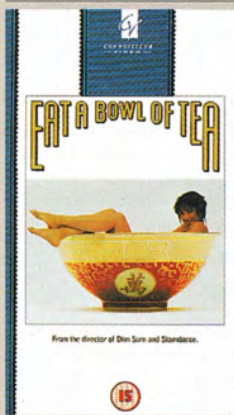
JERRY ON LINE #1

Peter Lydon – James Sillavan ©



'Jerry, I'm reading something that'll interest you... no it's not a script... no it's not my resignation and no it's not a film budget, though it could be... it's the phone bill Jerry, and it hurts. I'll be memo-ing staff to keep calls short and... Jerry? Are you there Jerry...

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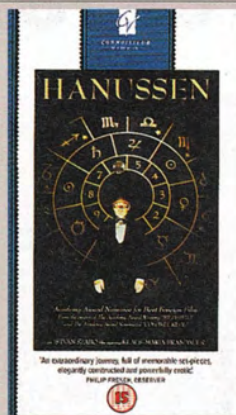
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Hungary/West Germany 1988

Certificate 15

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Klaus Maria Brandauer stars as the enigmatic Hanussen, a stage psychic with an unsettling foreknowledge of the rise of Naziism.

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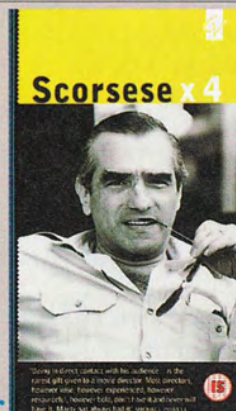
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Fascinating lack of formula

James Saynor

Some movie-script physicians, drawing on Aristotle, claim that you should never leave anything in a screenplay that isn't somehow integral to the story organism as a whole. Scripts shouldn't have tonsils or appendices. You can't really apply this to long-running television series, though, which perforce are made up of all kinds of deviations and repetitions just in order to fill the weekly sack of potatoes. But is the principle relevant to the three-hour drama serial, a form increasingly in evidence on British television? Structurally, these often fall between two stools – feeling neither like extended movies, not giving off the rhythmic factory hum of the multi-parters.

This couldn't be truer of *Downtown Lagos*, which kicks off BBC2's slew of new drama serials for the autumn. The three-hour effort, written by Leigh Jackson, seems to have almost nothing going for it in classic screenplay terms – which turns out to be a remarkable strength. Ostensibly, it's a 'worried-man' saga of the kind wearily familiar on British television, about a narcissistically nervous London professional beetling down various cul-de-sacs in his life. It has no clear generic identity – it's a sort of thriller, a sort of family drama, and a sort of comedy of embarrassment – and it has about four plot motors blithely whirring off in different directions. The thing is like one long broken-off sentence.

It has shopworn characteristics of the 'Thatcher hangover' drama, cutting from the etiolated lives of the uptown folk, to the sad brutality of the downtowners. It has sub-Bergman dream sequences. Everything happens comfortably within the North Circular, except for one brief trip to the shires. We never go anywhere near downtown Lagos. A visiting Griffin Mill from a US fiction factory would take one look at the show and conclude that the locally fabled 'writer-led' screen output of the British Isles was even more of an up-its-arse activity than he'd dared fear. Yet from a domestic viewpoint, it may be the most fascinating piece of original drama to emerge all year.

Leigh Jackson's debut piece of television was a Screen Two called *Drowning in the Shallow End*, a flaky chronicle of marital breakdown among the who-cares? bourgeoisie, the title of which perfectly reflected its floundering sense of narrative. Its gabby dialogue, though, created character shadings that were intriguing in their mysterious disconnectedness. The evanescent magic of Jackson's scene-writing is back in *Downtown Lagos*, and it's now clearer that his artistic goal is not to write the nattiest-ever yuppie love farce, but to explore a kind of Chekhovian television for the 90s that draws its very power from the content-less, point-of-view-less nature of its scenario.

The best thing about *Downtown Lagos* is that it's clear the author has no idea what, in strategic-dramatic terms, he's trying to create. Chekhov, writing about an early play that later became *Uncle Vanya*, said: "The play is awfully strange, and I wonder that strange things should come from my pen".



Chekhovian television for the 90s: Leigh Jackson's 'Downtown Lagos'

This awfully strange serial has that kind of author-wonder, too. The plot, if that's what it is, focuses on forty-ish solicitor, Mungo Dawson (Anton Lesser), a cornered-hamster type who, among his trendy peers, dresses like a 50s bank manager and holds a wine glass as if clutching a rolled umbrella. A cheque-fraud case he's handling, which involves some wily Nigerians, runs parallel with Mungo's yearning to win validation from his domineering dad.

This leathery martinet (Frederick Treves) is an unreformed colonialist who once grew tea in Kenya, until the Africans proved themselves better businessmen. Mungo keeps envisioning his rampaging about with an elephant gun and a 'wait till I see the whites of their eyes' dementia; he's neurotic that his father's hang-ups about wealthy blacks might be colouring his own dealings with the Nigerian racketeers. Numerous other story strands and characters-without-portfolio rattle around, as if in a soap opera that's finding its way. Stray references to Tom Selleck, gliders, fish memories and barometers yo-yo in and out of stray scenes spotlighting broken crockery and bathroom towels.

Jackson dutifully works up to the odd eruption of wayward violence, which then dissipates itself embarrassedly, like the shooting incident in *Uncle Vanya*. Formally, we shift between feather-light naturalism, schematic realism, paranoid hyper-realism, and outright hallucination. If, as script physicians claim, the classic film narrative should be like a river, sturdy and sure, this one is more like a series of canals dug by a child on a beach. Director Roger Michell and photographer Rex Maidment provide creamy, free-flowing visuals that expertly track this self-apologetic, fractured course.

The show tiptoes around the edge of formula – indeed, around the edge of drama itself – in the way that its lead character tiptoes around the edge of a life. Anton Lesser gives a full-throttle performance of unbridled diffidence and introversion as Mungo, the social Trabant. The vaporous, half-nibbled scenes – especially those involving Mungo and Alice, his girlfriend-from-the-edge (Kitty Aldridge) – speak deft little volumes in their ellipticity and inconsequen-

tiality. "Everything is a mess, so it must be real life", observes Alice at one point, apropos of nothing at all – a motto for the bewildered oddity of the entire project.

BBC1, meanwhile, has a 'worried-man' three-part of its own this autumn, the satirical *Look At It This Way*. This, however, is unbewildering, extrovert, and decisively structured, with little material that's extraneous to a central story organism. Its American co-funders should be able to get comfortably 'across' it.

Directed by Gavin Millar, not previously renowned for handling extrovert satires, the serial is a truer-blooded 'Thatcher hangover' yarn, adapted by Justin Cartwright from his savvy novel about the *Ploughman's Lunch* speciousness of London in the 80s. It also has the familiar uptown/downtown contrasts, and features another set of Africa references, as a lion loose from the zoo roams among the no-soul speculators and scriveners on the metropolitan scene.

The book's humour is to do with pushing the internal manias of these stereotypes to baroque extremes, in the manner of Tom Wolfe or Martin Amis, and the most important relationships on the page are between the characters and the styrofoam city. These two things don't translate satisfactorily to television, however, which needs an externalised 'psychological realism' as a bedrock, plus a certain amount of interpersonal chemistry. The jokes don't reside much in the book's dialogue, although this seems to be the only component that Cartwright has transferred to the screen. The result is a story organism that's little more than an exoskeleton of the source material – as with so many overly 'faithful' television adaptations.

Unfortunately faithless, though, are the changes wrought to the novel's worried-man narrator, a Yank who pens waspish, Wolfen essays for a New York magazine. Played here by David Dukes, he's been changed from a pushy, misogynistic American to a polite, understanding one. If this was done to please the US co-financier, A&E, it's a pretty smudgy manoeuvre in a project concerned with the death of integrity.

But it's also a no-nonsense engagement with the notion of formula – the creation of a story-led drama that's going to be internationally decodeable – which may be more and more appropriate in the opportunistic television climate to come. BBC drama always reflects the dilemmas and neuroses of the worried men who run it, and *Downtown Lagos* and *Look At It This Way* illustrate a fork in the path for quality British fiction. One route is the introverted, writer-led path, once beaten by twisted writer-auteurs like Dennis Potter and David Mercer. The other is the extroverted, story-led path, currently bulldozed by showily impersonal writer-réalisateurs like Lynda La Plante and Andrew Davies. For all the mild-mannered brilliance of *Downtown Lagos*, with its eccentric re-engineering of the three-part serial, the prospects for similar future dramas hardly seem propitious – to put it mildly. *'Downtown Lagos'* begins on 7 October and *'Look At It This Way'* on 22 November

'Chekhov, writing about an early play that later became 'Uncle Vanya', said: "The play is awfully strange, and I wonder that strange things should come from my pen". This awfully strange serial has that kind of author-wonder, too'

BY MARINA WARNER

BEAUTY & THE BEASTS

Disney's new version of the classic tale is fuelled by women's erotic impulses and a view of men as monsters, as are so many other versions, from Jean Cocteau to Angela Carter



● The first Beast was the god of love, Eros. The many successive versions of the *Beauty and the Beast* fairy tale have continued to develop him in this role, and the new Disney *Beauty and the Beast* is no exception.

In the romance the Alexandrian writer Apuleius interpolated into *The Golden Ass*, Eros makes love, invisibly, to a mortal Beauty – Psyche – who rivals his own mother Aphrodite in seductiveness. Psyche is forbidden to see him; her sisters goad her, warning her that her lover must be a monster, a cannibal, whose “favourite food is a woman far gone in pregnancy”. When Psyche breaks the prohibition, lighting a candle to look at him as he sleeps, he and all his magic surroundings vanish. Her fantasy of his monstrosity proves to be delusory – an important theme in the fairy tale, in which later Beauties have to discover for themselves that the Beast’s beastliness is an illusion lying in the eye of the beholder. Eros, mysterious, unknown, feared, exceeds all imaginable degree of charm when Psyche does look at him, but her failure to trust, and to obey, costs her his presence and his love. Apuleius’ tale echoes stories of Pandora and Eve in focusing on female curiosity as the dynamic of the sex. Punished for her disobedience, Psyche has to prove her love through many adventures and ordeals; finally, this Beauty is reunited with her Beast and adapts him, a god, to the human condition, to society through marriage, and they have a daughter called Voluptas – Pleasure.

The divine Beast offers writers and film-makers a figure of masculine desire, and the plot in which he moves presents a blueprint for the proper channelling of erotic energy in society. It is Psyche, however, who has to strive to that end; the story is her journey, the journey of the soul. This makes her the protagonist, occupying the more usually male role of the chival-

rous quester, but it also consistently leaves in place the Eros figure as the object of the soul’s quest, again in a reversal of the more expected pattern of chivalry.

As a female pilgrim’s progress, a rite of passage with a heroine at its centre, the tale of *Beauty and the Beast* has attracted numerous women interpreters. Linda Woolverton, the scriptwriter for the new Disney animation, follows in a long and distinguished line which includes *ancien régime* rakes, French governesses, English bluestockings, as well as more recently the Surrealists Leonora Carrington and Angela Carter. The earliest writer of true fairy tales to tackle the theme paradoxically challenged the very premises of the romance: at the end of the seventeenth century and beginning of the eighteenth, in one famous fairy tale after another, Marie-Catherine Jumel de Barneville, Comtesse d’Aulnoy, portrayed her heroines struggling with the conditions of arranged matches and arriving at different stratagems of deliverance from unsavoury suitors. Mme d’Aulnoy herself had been married off in her teens to a notorious libertine, and she and her mother were later charged with plotting to murder him by falsely accusing him of high treason, a capital crime. They were found guilty, but not before M. le Comte d’Aulnoy had spent three years in the Bastille under suspicion. Their sentences were suspended in exchange for spying abroad for the French crown, and when Mme d’Aulnoy finally returned to Paris, she presided over a fashionable salon where the guests played literary parlour games and dressed up in the costumes of characters in fairy tales.

The threat of animals at that time was a real and frightening one; in times of scarcity and hard winters bears and wolves would prey on towns and villages, and animal metamor- ►



Dark dreams: Max Ernst's 1930s collage from 'Le Lion de Belfort', section of

'Une semaine de bonté', top; Cocteau's 1946 'La Belle et la bête', above

phosis in the tales could consequently pack menace to a degree that can no longer be felt today, when crocodiles and sharks are sold as soft toys and endangered species outstrip the starving Somalians or the Bosnians for relief funds. The various Beast shapes to which the unsavoury lovers are confined in the fairy tales embodied Mme d'Aulnoy's and her contemporaries' view of marital union. In *The Ram*, the princess heroine simply leaves the eponymous Beast to die, while she busies herself taking charge of her father's kingdom at his side. In *The Green Serpent*, Mme d'Aulnoy elaborates the Cupid and Psyche story, and the Beast is portrayed as a true-hearted lover cursed with animal ugliness by a wicked fairy; her heroine Laidronette (Little Ugly One) is equally disfigured by an evil spell, but dauntless in her labyrinthine quest. Significantly, when Laidronette comes across a whole circle of hell peopled by men in enchanted animal shape, she discovers that they have been punished for various marital crimes – for wife-beating, rape and so forth – and that their shape corresponds to their offence.

Fairy tales, with their generic commitment to justice, often enclose a simple notion of retribution. Francesco Stefani's *The Singing Ringing Tree* (*Das Singende Klingende Bäumchen*) a family film made in the former GDR in 1957 and largely inspired by the Grimm Brothers' early nineteenth-century collection, blended a *Beauty and the Beast*-type tale with another familiar figure: the Haughty Princess who considers herself too good for every one of her dozens of suitors. Her punishment is ugliness: the live-action film animates the grotesque collapse of her beauty and follows her growing, painful lessons in kindness, humility and love as she cares for the magical creatures she once spurned – a giant goldfish, a golden-maned and golden-antlered horse and a flock of doves. Her pilgrim's progress eventually succeeds in freeing her mentor, the Prince, who himself has been changed into a bear by an evil magician. Once she has learned to love, her beauty returns. The Disney *Beauty and the Beast* adapts a similar idea of retributive justice when, at the beginning, it describes how the Prince spurned a beggarwoman who came to his door; for this brutal behaviour, she casts a spell on him that turns him into a brute for all to see. It's a piquant example of concurrence in the area of children's entertainment between the approaches of the old communist state and the doyen of freemarket cinema; the fun of fairy tales for grown-ups often lies in wagging fingers at the young, in a secular, ideological variation on the hellfire sermon.

Moral intentions have influenced fairy tales increasingly strongly since the nineteenth century; the Brothers Grimm led the way, as they re-edited and reshaped successive editions of their famous *Household Tales* to clarify their improving message. Their predecessors were less anxious about the possible effect on children of tales of incest, adultery or murder. The earliest fairy tale actually entitled *La Belle et la bête* was written by the French aristocrat Mme de Villeneuve in 1740, and it portrays the Beast as the victim of an ancient and malignant fairy

Beauty loves the Beast, even when he terrorises her. He is the 'monster of her dreams' and she likes him just as he is

who cursed him when the handsome youth turned down her amorous advances. The story encrypts the corrupt and vicious intrigues of court life, of fortune-hunting and marriage-broking, pandering and lust in the *ancien régime*, and, like many of the first literary fairy tales, it campaigns for marriages of true minds, for the rights of the heart, for freedom for the true lovers of romance.

The Disney film, of course, has abandoned the cynical combativeness of the tale's first interpreters and remained true to the romantic and idealist yearnings of later tellers. Fourteen years after Mme de Villeneuve's *La Belle et la bête*, Mme de Beaumont revised it in a polished résumé; it is her version that has become almost canonical, and that inspired Cocteau's film of 1946. Mme de Beaumont was a governess who worked for aristocratic families in England; she collaborated with her charges (she believed strongly in young women's capacities to think and act) on a pioneer pedagogical journal called *The Misses' Magazine*, in which she published conversations, fables, cautionary tales – and fairy stories. It's easy to catch, in her *La Belle et la bête*, the anxious tones of a well-meaning teacher raising her pupils to face their future obediently and decorously, to hear the hope that inside an undesirable husband might beat the heart of a good man, given a bit of encouragement.

Fairy tales' stock-in-trade has become didacticism, but Mme de Beaumont in the mid-eighteenth century was a pioneer in using the form to lead the expectations of the young; in spite of the genre's reputation for happy endings, it tends to teach its audience to know the worst so that they can perhaps deal with it when it happens. The nursery story of *Beauty and the Beast* assumes a female audience (as, it seems to me, does the Disney film) who fully expect to be given away to men who might well strike them as monsters. The social revolution which has established as the norm marriage from inclination has irreversibly altered the reception of such romances, and ironically transformed seventeenth-century women's resistance to their matrimonial lot, as well as eighteenth-century lessons in resignation, into romantic – and materialistic – propaganda for making a good marriage.

When men adopt this material, they often introduce special pleading on their own behalf; Cocteau's film, for all its delicacy and dream-like seductiveness, concentrates on awakening Beauty to consciousness of the Beast's goodness. He does not have to change, except in outward shape; she has to see past his unsightliness to the gentle and loving human being trapped inside. Christian Bérard's

designs intensify the Beast's poignancy; he's not an animal, but a hairy anthropomorphic changeling, a Quasimodo, a pitiful Elephant Man who deserves love if only women would listen to the imperatives of the heart, not the eye. King Kong is one of his lineage too, as the last words of the film make plain: "'Twas not the aeroplanes, 'twas Beauty killed the Beast". This strand in the history of *Beauty and the Beast* consists of variations on the theme of the *femme fatale*, on men's anguish in the face of female indifference, rather than women's vulnerability to male violence. Ironically, such interpretations make Beauty guilty of fixity, in a story that began as a narrative of a woman's passionate progress.

Underlying the static serenity of José Day's Beauty in Cocteau's film lies the Symbolist fetishisation of impassive femininity, as defined by Baudelaire; of Beauty who speaks of herself as "*un rêve de pierre*" (a dream of stone), with a granite breast on which men (poets) wound themselves and discover love ("*éternel et muet ainsi que la matière*" (eternal and mute as matter). Psyche-Beauty, as woman, is material, she is flesh, however cool and otherworldly her appearance; Eros-Beast belongs to the spirit world, and his enchanted castle, with its spell-binding moving sconces and speaking furniture, emanates from the higher realm of imagination, the dimension of dream and fantasy, where poets – like Baudelaire, like Cocteau himself – are sent through the love women inspire in them. Cocteau, as a Surrealist, was reinterpreting Symbolist doctrine of the feminine's role in creativity. Not for nothing had the *Dictionnaire abrégé du surréalisme* attributed to Baudelaire its definition of '*la femme*': "She who casts the greatest light or the greatest shadows into our dreams". The inflexion on "our" here is obviously masculine. This doesn't prevent Cocteau's *La Belle et la bête* from entrancing a female spectator again and again, but it does divert the story from the female subject to communicate a perceived male erotic hunger for beauty as stimulus to creativity. The ravishing aestheticisation of the film, from the flying laundry at the start to the twilit luxuries of the castle magic, extends the function of the feminine as the Beast's necessary lifeblood.

Cinema, like fairy-tale illustration, has to display the Beast (the word monster, interestingly derives from Latin *monstrare*, to show). The narrators of earlier versions of *Beauty and the Beast* could avoid giving precise indications of his horrible appearance, and describe his enchanted shape in the most general terms: he is merely so monstrous that anyone beholding him is struck down with terror for their lives. Early illustrators, however, had to wrestle with the problem; and late nineteenth-century printers of children's books pioneered full-colour illustration. At the beginning, mere animal form is sufficient horror in itself: in the Lambs' version, the earliest written for children in English, the artist simply visualised the Beast as a swine, like the victims of Circe's enchantments in *The Odyssey*. But the trend soon moved towards more anthropomorphic characteristics: two-legged, upright Beasts disfigured by elephant trunks, or boar's tusks,



Snouts and trunks:
illustration to Charles
Lamb's 'Beauty & the
Beast' (1811), top;
Gustave Doré's 'Little Red

**Riding Hood and the wolf
in bed' (1872), centre;
Walter Crane's illustration
for 'Beauty & the Beast'
(1874), above**

or wart-hog's snouts. The less-than-human took the shape of mammals equipped with natural weaponry. In this, the artists returned to Christian iconography of the devil, multiplying phallic protuberances on face and limbs. But they stopped short, unlike their medieval predecessors, at blazoning monstrous organs in the site of the genitals themselves. It's significant that women artists – fewer in number – tend not to stress the Beast's aggressive arsenal, or to focus on his ferocity, but incline towards characteristics of creatures traditionally classed as lower than mammals, visualising the repellent creature as toad-like, fishy, or lizard-like. From a woman's point of view, the repugnant sometimes looks less-than-masculine, a clammy, flaccid manifestation more like Gollum in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* than the male vision of a fallen angel of priapism.

Though the early literature offers different approaches to the Beast's nature, none of it suggests that his monstrosity fascinates and attracts the heroines, that they want to play with the Beast precisely because his animal nature excites them and gives licence to their own desire. The traditional oral material, however, like the Nordic fairy tale *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*, does depict the Beast-heroes as captivating in their very beastliness. The Grimms' *Rose Red and Snow White* describes how both the heroines run away screaming when they first set eyes on their suitor, the black bear. But they gradually get used to him, and begin to frolic with him: "They tugged his hair with their hands, put their feet on his back and rolled him about, or they took a hazel switch and beat him, and when he growled, they laughed. But the bear took it all in good part". Eventually, the two sisters help to disenchant him from the power of a malevolent dwarf, and he turns out to be a rich prince who marries one of them.

Bears became the most popular manifestation of the Beast, and as the twentieth century advances, they grow less fierce and more cuddly, keeping pace with the new values attached to the wilderness and its creatures as well as with the galloping sentimentalisation of teddy bears. In the Edwardian children's theatre version of *Beauty and the Beast*, bear costumes are recommended; the bear was known, after all, as the 'beast who walks like a man'.

In 1982, a television dramatisation of the fairy tale, directed by John Woods, was written by the poet, Ted Hughes. It should be much better known, for it develops the theme, implicit in the classical myth of Eros and Psyche, that Beauty's desire conjures the Beast to her side, and that, after she has lost him, her passion for him brings about their union. The Hughes-Woods version, though made for children, does not scant the heroine's erotic fantasy as the dynamic of the story. It begins with the father crazed with worry that every night his beloved daughter, the Princess, is visited by a monstrous and unnameable terror which takes possession of her; invisible, with a huge voice, this phenomenon occupies her dreams and her bed. Doctors are put to watch by her side, and they too are overcome with horror at what they feel, though they see nothing. Then a wandering

musician with a performing bear comes to the palace at the King's request, to entertain the melancholy and even mad Princess – and the bear charms her. She dances with him, and the King, her father, rejoices that the bear seems to have lifted the mad darkness that was oppressing her. But then, as they are dancing, the bear seizes her in his arms and carries her off. When, after a long search, the hunting-party tracks them down, the Princess begs them not to hurt her bear. They wound him, and she weeps – and then, as in other versions, her tears, the proof of her love, fall on his pelt and he stands up, transfigured into a beautiful prince.

Hughes' intuition that Beauty loves the Beast, even when he terrorises her in the night, reappeared in a more definite form in the popular CBS television series (also shown in Britain), in which the Beast never casts off his hybrid form. A roaring, rampaging half-lion, half-human creature, he reigns over the New York subway system as a defender of women and beggars, an urban Robin Hood who was born from an immaculate virgin and the seed of two fathers, the double lord of the underworld, one a good magus and the other a wicked wizard. Beauty in this case works in the DA's office, but communicates secretly with her saviour Beast; their love is passionate, chivalrous and illicit. He is the 'monster of her dreams', and she likes him just as he is.

It would be easy to dismiss these visions of the Beast's desirability as male self-flattery, or even, more seriously, as sentimental justifications of roughness, tyranny and rape. But to do so misses the genuine attempt of the fairy tale, sometimes, to face up to the complicated character of the female erotic impulse. The story has always been a great favourite for women: the early writers were followed by Victorians like Mary Lamb, who translated and adapted it for her brother, and Lucy Crane, who worked on it with her brother, the artist Walter Crane. More recently, Leonora Carrington, the Surrealist artist and writer, returned to the theme over and over again in her short stories of 1937-41 and in later images.

Carrington was writing from the age of nineteen onwards from the midst of a Surrealist circle centred on Max Ernst, and she responded to Surrealist fantasies about young women – *femmes enfants* – as the innocent, and therefore pure, mediums of erotic power. She voices Surrealist dreams of sexual freedom for men and women, intertwining the macabre English nursery-rhyme tradition with avant-garde flouting of decorum. Her imagery responds to Ernst's own collage novels, like *A Week of Kindness*, in which he imagined savage conjunctions and maulings, as well as celebratory carnal encounters. Carrington conjures equally fierce couplings of her feral heroines and their lovers. In *As they rode along the edge...*, the heroine, Virginia Fur, lives in a forest and travels at the head of a procession of a hundred cats, riding on a wheel. She has a huge mane and "long and enormous hands with dirty nails". "One couldn't really be altogether sure that she was a human being. Her smell alone threw doubt on it – a mixture of spices and ▶

◀ game, the stables, fur and grasses". Virginia makes love tempestuously with Igame, a boar, after he has presented himself to her in "the most sumptuous outfit" – apparel worthy of a wooer: "a wig of squirrels' tails and fruit hung around Igame's ears, pierced for the occasion by two little pikes he had found dead in the lake. His hoofs were dyed red by the blood of a rabbit. He hid his russet buttocks (he did not want to show all his beauty at one go)".

Carrington's stories throw important light on the development of the *Beauty and the Beast* story in the literature of women, for women. Generally speaking, her Beast represents the energy, hitherto crushed by conventional forces, inside her heroines' spirits. This motive force, in the manner of post-Freudian optimism, is erotic in character: in the wake of early utopian Revolutionaries, the Surrealists believed that the liberation of sexual desire would lead to wider freedom and fulfilment. Angela Carter's short tales, in *The Bloody Chamber*, show an uncannily similar spirit of mischief to Carrington's, even though she cannot have known the older woman's work as it has only very recently been collected. Carter too varied her interpretations of the *Beauty and the Beast* theme over and over again: in *The Courtship of Mr Lyon*, *The Tiger's Bride*, *The Werewolf*, *The Com-*

To enjoy a fairy-tale cartoon from the studio that made 'Snow White' and 'Cinderella' goes against the grain

stirs desire far more profoundly than would the highest pattern of princes.

Linda Woolverton and the team who collaborated on the new Disney *Beauty and the Beast* have clearly steeped themselves in the tale's history, on and off screen; prolonged and intense production meetings, turning over every last detail of representation and narrative, can almost be heard over the insouciant soundtrack. This is a fairy tale that's vividly aware of contemporary sexual politics; it has consciously picked out a strand in the tale's history and developed it for an audience of mothers who grew up with Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem, who have daughters who listen to Madonna and Sinéad O'Connor. Woolverton's screenplay gives us a heroine of spirit who finds romance on her own terms; and beneath this *prima facie* storyline, the interpretation contains many subtexts, both knotty and challenging, about changing concepts of paternal authority and rights, about permitted expressions of male desire, and prevailing notions in the quarrel about nature-nurture. Above all, it places troublingly before our eyes the domestication of feminism itself.

Nevertheless, while the Disney *Beauty and the Beast* ostensibly tells the story of the feisty, strong-willed heroine, and carries the audience along on the wave of her dash, bravery, self-awareness and integrity, the principal burden of the film's message concerns maleness, its various faces and masks, and, in the spirit of romance, it offers hope of regeneration from within the unregenerate male. The graphic intensity given the two protagonists betrays the weight of interest: Beauty is saucer-eyed, dainty, slender and wears a variation on the pseudo-medieval dresses of both Cinderella and Snow White, which, as in *Cinderella*, turn into *ancien régime* crinolines cum New Look debutante gowns for the scene of awakening love when she dances with the Beast. Her passage from repugnance to attraction also follows a movement from village hall to castle gate, in the conventional upwardly mobile style of fairy tales. The animators have introduced certain emancipated touches: she's dark-haired, walks with a swing, moves with fetching fleetness of gesture, and has a certain graceful carelessness about her appearance – the hook is that she's a bookworm, and the script even contains a fashionable bow in the direction of self-reflexiveness, for Belle likes reading fairy tales more than any other kind of book, and consequently recognises the type of story she's caught in.

So Belle is an improvement on Cinderella or Snow White. But, compared to the Beast, she's dull. He has the artists' full attention; the pneu-

matic signature style of Disney animation suits the Beast's character as male desire incarnate: he swells, he towers, he inflates, he tumescens. Everything about him is big, and capable of growing bigger: his castle looms, its furnishings dwarfed by its Valhalla-like dimensions. The candelabra, the clock, the teapot – the three servants who come to life with brio and exuberance – are like Lilliputians lost in a Brobdingnagian's lair. We see the Beast enraged, crowding the screen edge to edge; when he holds Belle he looks as if he could snap her between his teeth like a chicken wing. His body too looks as if it's constantly in the process of burgeoning; poised on narrow hooves and skimpy legs, the Disney Beast sometimes lollops like a big cat, but more often stands erect, rising to an engorged torso, with an enormous, bull-like head compacted into massive shoulders, maned and shaggy all over, bristling with fangs and horns and claws that almost seem belittled by the creature's overall bulk. The Beast's sexual equipment was always part of his charm – hidden or otherwise (it is, of course, dispersed by synecdoche all over his body in the Disney cartoon). When Titania falls in love with Bottom the Weaver, the associations of the ass were not lost on the audience. But the comic – and its concomitant, the pathetic – have almost entirely slipped away from this contemporary representation of virility.

Whereas Bottom, even in his name, was a figure of fun, and the Golden Ass, his classical progenitor, a ruefully absurd icon of (male) humanity, the contemporary vision of the Beast tends to the tragic. The new Disney Beast's nearest ancestor is the Minotaur, the hybrid offspring of Phaedra and the bull and an ancient nightmare of perverted appetite. (It is significant that Picasso adopted the Minotaur as his alter ego, as the embodiment of his priapism, in the vigour of youth as well as in the impotence of old age.) Disney's Minotaur also conveys the rage of the male at experiencing limits: when the Beast is thwarted or disobeyed he lashes out and roars and ruts, but uselessly. Belle fears him, but his violence has no effect on her, or, it seems, on anyone else. He's a prisoner of his own powerful bulk, just as he's a prisoner in his own castle.

The Disney cartoon has doubled the traditional plot by adding a second Beast, Gaston, who personifies another side to the rampant hunk in need of civilising, and refracts the Beast in a second series of mirrors. In French, 'bête' means 'stupid' when used as an adjective; in Cocteau's film, Jean Marais' Beast can only grunt, though his magical palace breathes caressing words in his erotic baritone to Beauty when she moves about her room. The Beauty who confronts and eventually transforms the Beast though love restores him to culture, civility and language, and in the process, discovers herself. Cocteau's Beast speaks to Beauty through her mirror, for instance, so that she advances towards the knowledge of her desires when she contemplates her own reflection.

The Disney version flatters its heroine with far more profound wisdom; her discovery of the Beast's qualities does not go hand in hand with any needed growth in self-awareness. She



pany of Wolves. These are some of the most shivery and sensual tales about women's sexual initiation, and they lift the covers from the body usually concealed in the fairy tale. Indeed, Carter herself noted the hypocritical evasions of so many modern versions. In a review of a recent study of the fairy tale by Betsy Hearne, she commented caustically that the story was increasingly set to work "to house-train the id".

Beauty's attraction to the Beast before his regeneration reflects pulp fantasies about abduction in romance fiction, and even pornography's conjuration of sadism and rape. The territory is heavily mined; one of the reasons Angela Carter's work, in screenplays as well as books, provokes so many contradictory and powerful feelings rises from her plain dealing with erotic dominance as a source of pleasure for men – and for women. But Carter's tales are polymorphous, too, and full of rich contradictions. *The Magic Toyshop* tells the story of a Beast's defeat: the puppet master makes a monstrous swan automaton to assault his niece, but she rejects him, refuses the part in his puppet show and eventually escapes, with the whole family, from his designs. For *The Company of Wolves*, Carter adapted several stories to dramatise a young girl's sexual awakening and the call of the wild. The company of wolves here



Respectable desires:
Henry Fuseli's 'Titania and
Bottom', a rural dream, top;
the urban tale of 'Edward

Scissorhands' (1990), above;
Disney's last successful
animation 'The Little
Mermaid' (1989), left

knows her own mind from the start. Nor are all Beasts amenable to instruction: Gaston is a killer – of animals – and remains one; he's a lyncher who preys on social outcasts (suspected lunatics and marginals), he wants to breed (he promises Belle six or seven children), and he's capable of deep treachery in pursuit of his own interests. The penalty for his brutishness is death: he falls off a high crag from the Beast's castle. He's the true beast, Calvinist and unredeemed, socially deviant in his supremacist assumptions; unsound on ecology in both directions (he abuses the natural, the forest, and culture, the library). What is significant about this caricature, above all, is that he's a man in a man's shape, a dead ringer for Clark Kent as played by Christopher Reeve. But Supermen are out, and animals are in – witness the success of Robert Bly and his theories of men's need for the wild in *Iron John*.

Splitting the male into the good beast and the bad beast adds needed drama to the story, but it's also a device that helps define by contrast the possibility of a superior, virtuous brand of masculinity, embodied by the Beast. Unlike Gaston, he does not hunt and shoot other creatures; unlike Gaston, he's aware of his shortcomings, and grieves like a good existentialist at his condition; unlike Gaston, he appreciates books and indeed possesses a huge library, big enough to keep even a bookworm like Belle happy for a while. Whereas Caroline Thompson's *Edward Scissorhands* (1990), the most recent attempt by a woman writer-producer to portray a good Beast, foundered on such a paragon's capacity to survive in the world and sent him back into solitary confinement in his gothic castle, Woolverton's revision cuts its cloth to fairy tale's traditional pattern of heroic optimism and presents a Beast who fits the profile of the Bly-style New Man: virile yet tender, natural yet cultivated, in touch with his emotions, connected to the child within yet mature and responsible in his attitude. All he needed was the love of a good woman. Sometimes – though it seems grudging after clamouring for positive feminine representations for so long – such a huge helping of female autonomy, responsibility, self-determination, and powers of salvation add up to a mighty charge for one small Belle to shoulder.

In *Edward Scissorhands*, the heroine also acts quickly, with gallantry and courage, to save this outcast from a mob; but he is fatally hampered by his hybrid form, half way between the automaton and the creature: his weapon hands encumber him with man-made technology and cut him off from the desirable aspects of the human, which derive from what is perceived as natural, as animal. The further the cinematic outcast lies from the machine, the more likely his redemption; the beast as cyborg, as in *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* (1991), represents the apocalyptic culmination of human ingenuity and its diabolical perversion. Whereas, to a medieval spectator, the devil was perceived as close to the animal order in his hooved hairiness, and a bloodless angel in gleaming armour approximated the divine artefact, the register of value has since the eighteenth century been turned topsyturvy and the

wild man has come into his own as an ideal. The evolution of the Beast in fairy tale, and his portraits in film, illustrate this shift in cultural values as well as sexual expectations.

The most significant plot change to the traditional story in the Disney film concerns the role of Beauty's father, and it continues the film's trend towards granting Beauty freedom of movement and responsibility for the action. The traditional fairy tale often includes the tragic motif that in return for his life, the father promises the Beast the first thing to greet him when he returns home; as in the story of Jephthe in the Bible, his daughter, his youngest and most dear, rushes to the gate to meet him, and the father has to sacrifice her. In the eighteenth-century French fairy story, which focused on the evils of matrimonial custom, the father hands over Belle to the Beast in exactly the same kind of legal and financial transaction as an arranged marriage, and she learns to lump it with her new husband. Bruno Bettelheim, following in the governesses' footsteps, takes a strict line in *The Uses of Enchantment*, where he analyses the story as a lesson in female maturity: Beauty learns to relinquish her Oedipal attachment to her father and discovers her own sexuality with the Beast; furthermore, she should be grateful to her father for making the discovery possible.

Linda Woolverton's script sensibly sets such patriarchal analysis aside, and instead provides subplots to explain away the father's part in Beauty's predicament, as well as supplying Beauty herself with all the determination to make her mistress of her own fate. In the last successful Disney animation, *The Little Mermaid* (1989), the heroine teaches her father, the God of the Sea, to respect her desires, somewhat in the manner of Madonna's song, 'Pappa don't preach'. A few years on, the Disney studio, sensitive to the rise of children's rights, has replaced the father with the daughter as the enterprising authority figure in the family.

The tales in the *Beauty and the Beast* cycle number among the most eloquent testaments to women's struggles – against arranged marriage, towards a definition of the place of sexuality in love. The disenchantment of the Beast has long been a theme in the stories women have made up, among themselves, to help, to teach, to warn. Liking a Disney film doesn't come easily; admitting to enjoying a fairy-tale cartoon from the same studio that made *Snow White* and *Cinderella*, that held up simpering, gutless, niminy-piminy idiots as paragons and introduced children everywhere to expect malignancy from older women goes against the grain, like accepting all of a sudden that John Major has developed dress sense, or the Pope become a feminist. But this version of *Beauty and the Beast* is funny, touching and lively, and communicates romantic hopefulness with panache and high spirits. It's a true inheritor of a long literary tradition of romance, sieved through the consciousness of 70s feminism, which asked for plucky fairy-tale heroines and got this: a Hollywood belle who prefers books to hunks.

'Beauty and the Beast' opens on 9 October and is reviewed on page 45 of this issue

● Now you see him, now you don't. At the end of *Unforgiven*, gunfighter, father and widower William Munny (Clint Eastwood) comes home, and then disappears into legend. Well, a kind of legend. According to an end title, Munny packed up his two children, abandoned his struggling hog farm in the middle of a Kansas nowhere, and took off, "some said to San Francisco, where it was rumoured he prospered in dry goods".

San Francisco is not generally the last resting place of Western heroes, but it is the stomping ground of Inspector Harry Callahan and it was the birthplace, in 1930, of Clinton Eastwood Jnr. So that exit has its resonance: William Munny enjoys a double homecoming and goes to meet his maker. And perhaps the Eastwood Western has also come full circle – especially if this proves to be his last, as he has teasingly suggested it might. Whatever the case, it will certainly stand as one of his most complex and satisfying, a testament to what Eastwood and the Western have come to mean to each other through three decades.

The most resonant connection between William Munny and the Eastwood persona is a sense of negation. That final disappearance, and prior to it the mystery of who and what Munny is, exemplify an actor whose speciality is not being there. He is the Man with No Name in his Italian Westerns and a literal wraith in two of his US ones (*High Plains Drifter*, 1972; *Pale Rider*, 1985). Eastwood has tapped, perhaps, into the essential comedy of this post-modern age, in which we take all our pleasures knowingly. He allows audiences to indulge every wish-fulfilment fantasy of super-competent heroism without having to believe in the hero.

Which is not to say that he is drained of positive value – just that his heroism is exercised as a self-conscious gesture, as if 'doing right' was somehow detached from personal virtue. When the terrified burghers in *High Plains Drifter* give the Stranger *carte blanche* in order to defend their festering little town, one of the first things he does is to present jars of sweets and a pile of blankets to a family of Indians who have just been abused by the owner of the general store ('dry goods' bulk large in the Western scheme of things). The Indians are never seen again and don't seem to have any place in the town.

It is appropriate to talk of the comedy of the Eastwood presence, because the figure of the macho, monosyllabic hero was conceived in

irony – long before Eastwood the director began picking up plaudits for undermining Eastwood the actor (the US critics have now given wholehearted approval to *Unforgiven*). Eastwood seems never to have been fully convinced about himself as an actor, and to have looked on his film work with the eye of a director long before he began directing.

The 'Dollars' revolution

The beginning of this unease might be in his earliest recorded brush with acting, in a high-school play, which he anticipated with such terror that he considered doing his first disappearing act, and afterwards found so humiliating that he vowed never to go near the boards again. According to one view, he hasn't; as Pauline Kael put it: "He isn't an actor... so one could hardly call him a bad actor. He'd have to do something before we could consider him bad at it". This is, as it were, the negative view of Eastwood's negativity, to which the riposte might be the lesson he imbibed from one of his drama teachers about the essence of screen acting: "Don't just do something, stand there".

Of course, many actors have founded careers on the same principle – think of the laid-back cult of Robert Mitchum. The point about Eastwood is the scowling, cigarillo-chewing intensity with which he does nothing, and the way his films are activated by other people's reactions to this glowering enigma, either hostile-suspicious (as in *High Plains Drifter*) or amused-sympathetic (*The Outlaw Josey Wales*, 1976). There is something inevitably comic about this reactive kind of cinema – in which a hero who is demonstrably the fastest, deadliest *hombre* who ever stalked the earth at the same time seems so put upon. Forget the action heroes of the past, Eastwood's closest screen cousin might be Buster Keaton, another version of suffering impassivity who seems to be constantly calling disasters upon himself, which he deals with in super-human athletic fashion.

The interaction of Eastwood the director with his screen persona recalls the great director-comics more than it does the work of those dramatic actors – from Charles Laughton and Ray Milland to Paul Newman and Jack Nicholson – who have directed from time to time. Eastwood is the Man with No Name or Dirty Harry in the public's mind. But there's a self-conscious scaffolding round those figures, the development of a career separate from and often in opposition to them, a love-hate

between creator and persona, that also resembles Charlie Chaplin and the Tramp. And at least since *High Plains Drifter*, the double take, an extra squint or twitch of surprise, has been part of Eastwood's armoury.

He tried, in fact, to develop that other career before the Man with No Name was even thought of. During his stint as 'ramrod' Rowdy Yates on the television series *Rawhide* (1958-66), he noticed the limitations of many of the assigned directors, and the deadening effect of the conventions of the television Western itself. "When I was up on location one time, we were shooting some vast cattle scenes – about two thousand head of cattle. We were doing some really exciting stampede stuff... But the shots were being taken from outside the herd, looking in, and you didn't see too much... I said to the director and producer, 'I'd like to take an arriflex, run it on my horse and go right in the middle of this damn thing... because there are some beautiful shots in there that we are missing'... But they kind of double-talked it away. I could see they didn't want to upset a nice standard way of movie-making" (*Focus on Film*, Summer-Autumn 1976).

The executives eventually threw Eastwood a 'bone', allowing him to direct trailers for the next series of *Rawhide*, while holding out the promise of his doing a complete episode, which never materialised. So the show's second lead went to Europe, for his rebirth as the Man with No Name, which was to some extent the rebirth of the Western, the explosion of its fustier conventions. (Eastwood mentions the then Hollywood rule against 'tie-ups', whereby someone firing a gun and someone being hit could not be shown in the same shot but had to be separated by a cut.) Sergio Leone destroyed those conventions because he didn't know about them. Eastwood did, which makes the *Dollars* films more consciously 'anti-Western' on his part than on the director's. Certainly his decision to work in Europe was a conscious step away from what was being done and what was available to him at home; the first step in the creation, the direction, of a persona which would be built on a series of alienation effects.

Leone has been given the title of Eastwood's 'mentor' – to be followed back home by Don Siegel. But Leone and Eastwood were practically the same age, and *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964) was only Leone's second film as director. Although who did what was later the subject of some contention, Eastwood has claimed a creative role in

'Unforgiven' does not mock the Eastwood persona as his other Westerns do, argues Richard Combs

SHADOWING THE HERO



'We all have it comin', kid': Clint Eastwood as William Munny in 'Unforgiven'

the *Dollars* revolution – he brought his own wardrobe with him from Hollywood, and worked on the initial script: “The character talked a lot more in the script; I took a lot of his dialogue out. My point of view was, the more the leading character talked, the less mystique he had, and the more dissipated the strength of the film”.

It's probably true to say that Eastwood returned to the US as much a director as an actor in his own mind (“working on the European scene sort of inspired me to get back into directing”), and he had an option on *Play Misty for Me* some three years before he was allowed to make it in 1971. Ironically, or fittingly, during the protracted process of setting up *Coogan's Bluff* (1968) as the film that would re-establish Eastwood with the American audience, Siegel was suggested to him as a director because they shared that foreign flavour: “So they said, ‘What about Don Siegel? You're out of European films and although he isn't, he's got sort of a cult following in France’”.

Urban alter ego

By the time he came to work with Siegel, Eastwood was unlikely to have needed a mentor at all. He has described the older man's influence mainly in terms of his economy and organisation in production, which goes with a certain lean location realism that in turn became one of Eastwood's hallmarks. More indefinably, Siegel probably helped to ‘Americanise’ or modernise the Man with No Name mystique – most obviously by providing him with an urban alter ego in *Dirty Harry* (1971), but also in a strain of mocking religious symbolism (the put-upon hero becomes a real martyr), and in matters of style, composition and lighting.

Cinematographer Bruce Surtees (*Dirty Harry*, *High Plains Drifter*, *The Outlaw Josey Wales*) is important enough here to be part of a creative triumvirate. Siegel's predilection for lighting even his Western subjects as if they were interior, urban ones – with an emphasis on closed spaces and foreground shadow against distant, outdoor light – is picked up by Eastwood as another way of defining, delimiting, masking his on-screen self. “First place, I'm not that enamoured of my face that I think it should be absolutely plastered in front of the camera every minute... I feel that if the presence is there, when you want to you can pump the light in, but it's got to be at the right moment” (Christopher Frayling, *Clint Eastwood*). From ►

THE CHANGING FACE OF A WESTERN MAN



A Fistful of Dollars (1964)

"I was still on 'Rawhide', where we'd got a hiatus around February-April. Normally, I'd do nothing, but in 1964, my agent comes up and says, 'How would you like to go to Spain to make an Italian-Spanish-German co-production re-make of a Japanese samurai film?' 'Hell no', I told him. Well, he got me to read the story and I recognised it as Kurosawa's 'Yojimbo', which I'd recently seen and figured would make a good Western... I was enthralled by the idea of having the hero... not the clean-cut Rowdy Yates type. So I went over, got on far better with Leone than I'd imagined. It was hysterical with the language problem, but we had an interpreter; we fudged along and it worked OK."



High Plains Drifter (1972)

"'High Plains Drifter' was great fun because I liked the irony of it, the irony of doing a stylised version of what happens if the sheriff in 'High Noon' is killed, and symbolically comes back as some avenging angel or something – and I think that's far more hip than doing just a straight Western, those straight old conflicts we've all seen."



The Outlaw Josey Wales (1976)

"I used Bruce Surtees in 'The Outlaw Josey Wales' because his photography has a hard light effect and

I wanted that. I wanted to backlight the whole movie; a lot of guys are afraid to do it... It's very easy to do if you shoot in the fall. It's the best time to shoot a Western: the sun stays low and you've got cross-light; it's not overhead and flat all the time... The first part of the film showed a kind of idyllic light; then all of a sudden it goes very sombre. Then it gets to a nicer tone as his life gets better – he's going from a loser to a winner."



Pale Rider (1985)

"I think the Preacher in 'Pale Rider' was, maybe, a young preacher killed by the marshal at another time. Megan says a prayer and the Preacher is sent down from the mountains. Did you notice when she's praying there's almost a face looking from the mountains, big eyes of snow? I like that... Whether the hero is a supernatural being or an emissary from a higher plane, to me, it's just the spirit. He brings spirit to these discouraged people, he encourages them in the fight for their own rights."

◀ *Heartbreak Ridge* (1986) onwards, Surtees has been replaced by his camera operator, Jack N. Green, who has worked with the same dark-toned palette.

If Eastwood's static role makes his films comedies of sorts, games of bluff and challenge, a more violent version of Laurel and Hardy tit-for-tat, it also means that their subject is somewhere else. It's what happens to everyone else, how the world is changed after this nameless, placeless figure has ridden out of a mirage (*High Plains Drifter*) and disappeared back into mystical, fog-shrouded snowscapes (*Pale Rider*). The American Western could never be the same, in its optimism, its Puritanism, its complacency, after Eastwood returned from Europe with a hero so extreme in his cynicism, his aloofness, his Latin ruthlessness. But for the Western, and Eastwood as an American director, to go any further, the Man with No Name had to be found a place, transformed, or simply revealed as someone who had no reason for being there, who really wasn't there at all.

Punishment and redemption

It's usually assumed that Eastwood's first Western as director, *High Plains Drifter*, was, if not a homage, at least made under the Leone influence. Eastwood disagrees – "I didn't shoot it like he does; I used a different style. The character might resemble his hero" – yet it's around the figure of the Stranger (or the Man with No Name by any other name) that the differences begin to emerge. Resisting Universal's pressure to shoot on the backlot, Eastwood built the real-seeming town of Lago on the shore of Lake Mono to shoot both exteriors and interiors.

Lago is half-way between a Fordian pioneer

settlement and the more abstract communities of Leone – townships where there's hardly any sense of townspeople, arenas for factional disputes or cruel contests of cupidity. Lago has some of that strangeness – it's a town without children – but the core of the plot has to do with the economics of the place, the secret that three businessmen have buried ("for the good of everybody, that's the price of progress", as one of them says), and which leads to a flamboyant purgatorial punishment. And redemption: when the Stranger rides out, the town has been visited by hellfire but it's still standing; one of its most redeemable citizens, a midget, is writing the inscription on a murdered man's grave that will allow his soul – and the Stranger – to rest. In a famous phrase that came out of the Vietnam war, it became necessary to destroy the town in order to save it.

High Plains Drifter is a tight little parable about a crisis in a community which needn't, as Eastwood has said, even have been told as a Western. In fact, its inspiration seems to have been one of those archetypal urban horror stories of a victim's cries for help being ignored by an entire neighbourhood. *The Outlaw Josey Wales*, on the other hand, straggled all over the West in the aftermath of the Civil War, to show its casualties – outcasts, misfits, and one determinedly Fordian granny – being reknit into a community. Eastwood's Josey Wales is a hero scrambled and remade several times – and is least convincing when he is most positive, as a farmer and family man at the beginning, before becoming a border raider, consumed by the need for revenge, then a reluctant shepherd to an inadvertent band of pilgrims.

Vietnam seems to have a direct bearing on

this tale of a binding up of the wounds of war, and the richness of *Josey Wales* is only partly to do with the 'humanising' of the Man with No Name. It's more to do with Eastwood's re-adaptation to the American Western, incorporating its recent changes and taking them further. When he returned to the US at the end of the 60s, after all, it was not to the Western of *Rawhide* or *The First Traveling Saleslady*, but to a genre that had entered its own critical/apocalyptic/self-castigating mode, influenced by Vietnam, by notions of 'social banditry', and by changing views on how the West was won. Philip Kaufman was originally hired to direct *The Outlaw Josey Wales* on the strength of his James brothers film, *The Great Northfield Minnesota Raid*, which features a 'new realism' quite like Eastwood's. David Webb Peoples' script for *Unforgiven* dates back to the mid-70s, written under the revisionist influence of *The Wild Bunch* and *McCabe and Mrs Miller*.

In Eastwood's last Western, *Pale Rider*, it all came together: the rugged location realism, Surtees' photography throwing shadows and gloom over everything, and a sense both of Westerns past (the child's attachment to an impossible hero, out of *Shane*) and of their recent rewriting (the plot, about miners trying to buck the 'system' in a company town, is not unlike *McCabe*). What doesn't really fit any more is Eastwood himself: the director has stylised his own presence to the extent that, instead of being a negative pole to which the other characters can react positively, he leaves unhelpful gaps in the plot and thematic development. Even as a ghost, a wish-fulfilment hero, the Preacher should connect more than he does. Is he another version (the spirit) of the heroine's missing husband; is he the alter ego, the 'shade', of the villainous lawman he must ultimately confront?

Unforgiven more artfully raises questions about its hero, without having to pretend that he's a will o' the wisp. And it convincingly describes a Western town as a violent, muddy hellhole, without pretending that it really is hell and that only an avenging angel can put the world to rights. For the first time, Eastwood seems to lose his sense of discomfort with himself on screen, to the extent that *Unforgiven* is about William Munny in a way that *High Plains Drifter* is not about the Stranger, nor *Pale Rider* about the Preacher.

Perhaps also for the first time, Eastwood has allowed his on-screen character some naturalistic development. His own ageing – now sixty-two – becomes a factor in the role (Eastwood reputedly held on to the script until he was old enough to play the part). Compare this with the speeded-up way John Wayne aged through his roles: already the patriarchal Tom Dunson in *Red River* at forty, and retiring Captain Nathan Brittles in *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* at forty-two. Mystery and ambiguity still surround Munny's beginning and end, but it's no longer a question of his being produced by or absorbed by a brooding landscape.

At the climax of *Pale Rider*, when the devilish lawman who has been brought in to subdue the miners comes face to face with the Preacher, there's a moment of recognition,

GHOSTLY PRESENCES

Clint Eastwood talks to Peter Keogh about the Western

Peter Keogh: Were you worried about making a film in a genre that's been declared dead?

Clint Eastwood: The Western has been pronounced dead so many times for so many years; I imagine it will be pronounced dead another twenty times before the century is over. I remember when I did *A Fistful of Dollars* – before the picture was completed there were pronouncements that the Western was dead. Then a little article in *Variety* said the Western is dead, but there's this little film from Italy called *Per un pugno di dollari* that's doing well. Well, I didn't think too much about it because that wasn't the title of the film I made. Later there was another thing about *Per un pugno di dollari* with Clint Eastwood, and I thought, "Wait a second! What am I doing in this?" So then I realised that they'd changed the title. The film progressed through Europe and did well. That was another case of the Western being declared dead.

The film ends with a dedication to Don and Sergio. How do the Spaghetti Westerns hold up to the other films you've done?

Those were fun pictures, but they were stylised and operatic and the story didn't mean too much. It was mostly satire, with a character who comes along and events happen – the character really hasn't much feeling as to where he's been or where he's going. At least not to the same degree as a Josey Wales-type character, who's a victim and a warrior trying to escape conflict, but conflict keeps trailing him. Or like this character, William Munny, whose conscience is killing him.

The first Western I did in the US after the European Westerns was *Hang 'em High*. I'd been offered at that time a much larger Western, *Mackenna's Gold*. But I wanted to do *Hang 'em High* because it discussed the pros and cons of capital punishment. I was looking to explore new things – I didn't want to get mired down in the Man with No Name character.

'Unforgiven', like 'Pale Rider', 'High Plains Drifter' and 'The Outlaw Josey Wales', features a hero who is a mythic, Biblical figure of retribution. What's the reason for this fascination? I've always been interested in mythical characters – though the Jehovah-like avenger of *Pale Rider* is quite different from Munny. Munny has a lot of demons: when he gets ill, he visits hell in hallucinations that realise a lot of feelings – including the memory of his wife who straightened out

his life for a period of time. He's constantly trying to talk himself into thinking he's worthy. He and Little Bill are very much alike, but Little Bill has the advantage of acting in the name of the law. Not unlike *Dirty Harry*, or the LA police who beat Rodney King? *Dirty Harry* has the same advantage as Little Bill in that he's acting on the side of what's right, at least in his mind. A lot of police officers who have been involved in criminal activity can also justify that they were doing law-enforcement work. That's letting them off the hook slightly, but I think criminals who are not involved with law enforcement find a rationale for what they do; most people think they're right in what they're doing.

Could you discuss the depiction of women in this film?

Well, it starts out with injustice: the fact that these women were treated like property and were not given the proper respect when a criminal act was perpetrated against them is the catalyst for the story. I think that was an appealing aspect of the project, and I also liked the fact that William Munny was living with the memory of a woman and was even monogamous to her memory and that she becomes a figure that accompanies him.

Where do you think this film will fit with the 'family values' controversy?

The crimes Munny commits are basically in support of his family. I don't know how it will fit in. This guy is in desperation, but it's a combination of wanting to take care of his kids and the allure of adventure. When the Scofield Kid rides off into the horizon and Munny looks off, there's a

sort of a dream, a feeling of "I could go back to doing what I do. I'm obviously not successful as a pig farmer. I could go off and do what I know how to do best – I could eliminate these guys with the justification that they committed a heinous crime. And my conscience certainly wouldn't be any worse off".

You were saying two years ago that you might be reaching the stage in your career where the director is taking prominence over the actor.

I was thinking about separating the two; even eight years ago when I started analysing this script, I thought this might be a good last picture in which to do both jobs. The next picture I do I'm going to act and let someone else direct – I'm playing a secret-service guy with a lot of baggage. Wolfgang Petersen is directing; it's called *In the Line of Fire*.

Do you bristle at the word 'auteur'? I think of making a movie as an ensemble. It's the work of a lot of people and it's presumptuous to credit it all to one person. A director is merely the person who keeps waving the flag and encouraging everyone to charge the hill. You can shape the direction or shape the tone, but by and large you're only as strong as the support you surround yourself with.

Do you think 'Unforgiven' will finally get you the respect you deserve?

"Deserve has got nothing to do with it". Ha-ha. There's always a line in a film that's applicable. It's like the line in *White Hunter, Black Heart*, where he says they'll name a special Academy Award after me and all the wrong guys will win it.



Justice or vengeance: Munny resurrects his old ways in 'Unforgiven'

which might be two old adversaries squaring off for the last time, but is more like a man already dead confronting the spectre that has long haunted him. In *Unforgiven*, this 'recognition' is a theme played throughout the film. It is, primarily, the relationship between William Munny, the ex-gunfighter who claims now to be a reformed character drawn back to violence only by hard times, and a sheriff known as "Little Bill". Himself an ex-gunman, now a strict law enforcer who despises the cheap glorification of violence in dime novels – and played to boot by nice Gene Hackman – Little Bill eventually dispenses the most sadistic violence in the film.

'Bird' and 'Black Heart'

Violence, such a straightforward matter in Eastwood's past of provocation-reaction, here takes a more deviously expanding, all-inclusive course. It begins when a prostitute in the mountain town of Big Whiskey, Wyoming, laughs at a cowboy's "teensy little pecker"; he draws a knife and cuts up her face. The brothel madam, Strawberry Alice (Frances Fisher), thinks that hanging would be a fit punishment. When Little Bill, who is first going to whip the cowboy and his partner, decides instead to 'fine' them seven ponies (because the brothel owner is mostly upset by the damage to what he considers 'property'), the outraged prostitutes pool their resources to put up a bounty on the two cowboys.

Munny is approached with the offer by a cocky but short-sighted young gunfighter (Jaimz Woolvett); taking along his equally elderly ex-partner Ned Logan (Morgan Freeman), he heads for Big Whiskey and a final orgy of violence. The hero, then, is pulled along by other forces, other characters, much as he was in *The Outlaw Josey Wales*. But *Unforgiven* goes further, opening out doubts about what the hero has become, about what he was, so that the *Josey Wales* progression from farmer to killer to guide and potential farmer again becomes a series of circling conundrums. In a way, the whole film expands on the doubt we feel at the very beginning of *Josey Wales*: do we believe Eastwood, the Man with No Name, in his first incarnation as a farmer?

Through most of *Unforgiven*, Munny is protesting that he has gone straight, that his dead wife Claudia had shown him the error of his ways, turned him into a virtuous husband, a caring father, a hardworking farmer. His reminiscences with Ned Logan about the old days are told in horror at the shootin', drinkin', killin' feller he once was. But the regret doesn't gel with the Eastwood persona, or is it just his limitations as an actor, as referred to by Kael? Isn't it a relief when he sheds this reformed self, accepts the burden of his past that people keep thrusting at him – a "known thief and murderer", the killer of women and children, "more cold-blooded than William Bonney" – and takes the vengeance trail?

Except that the past we keep hearing about is no more believable. It seems of a piece with the lurid tales that a dime novelist is concocting about another gunslinger, the flamboyant 'assassin' English Bob (Richard Harris). Munny eventually does all that might be expected ►

◀ of the Man with No Name, then rides out of Big Whiskey, in a thunderstorm, as wraith-like as the Stranger or the Preacher. As he leaves, he emits a stream of curses and invective that suggests the ludicrousness of legend, the exaggeration of his reputation that, in a final twist, he plays into with grim resignation: "I'm comin' out! Any son-of-a-bitch takes a shot at me, not only gonna kill him, I'm gonna kill his wife! And all his friends... burn his damn house down! You better not cut up nor otherwise harm no whores! Or I'll come back and kill every one of you sons-of-bitches!"

Unforgiven doesn't mock and play away from the Eastwood persona as his other Westerns have done. That persona is for the first time turned into a fully developed character – which means it is then opened up to other doubts and ambiguities, because for the first time this persona joins the same world as the other characters and is compared with (and even doubled by) them. Munny/Eastwood is treated rather like the biographical subjects of two films Eastwood has made since *Pale Rider* – *Bird* (1988) and *White Hunter, Black Heart* (1990). There is a further connection, and a different displacement of the hero, in the way the self-destructive black hero of *Bird* becomes the black tracker of

White Hunter, who leads film director/big-game hunter John Wilson to his goal, and then dies in his place. Here the black Ned Logan dies for William Munny, whipped to death like the marshal in *High Plains Drifter*, the Stranger's previous, human incarnation.

It is not only blacks who operate in complex ways in Eastwood's films. Eastwood has won some praise (including on one occasion being dubbed "Hollywood's most feminist film director") for his tough women characters, usually foils to the macho certainties, or ways of drawing out the vulnerabilities of Dirty Harry and his other cop roles.

Unforgiven also seems to emphasise that strength: there's the positive influence of dear, dead Claudia and the self-reliance of the prostitutes. But like everything else, it comes with ambivalence. The prostitutes are caught up in the cycle of violence, and the fact that Claudia is gone but not forgotten means she hangs over the film with a hint of the Gothic. (Eastwood can't allow even his more human Western heroes – such as Josey Wales – to be married for long.) Perhaps Claudia was too much of a paragon to be represented. Or perhaps the lack of conviction about the reformed Munny is that he half-suspects he has

been unmanned, just as the hero of *The Beguiled* was in a ladies' seminary.

Unforgiven. The stark title, without benefit of an article – necessary, perhaps, to distinguish it from John Huston's film – suggests a judgment as fully religious as in any other Eastwood film, and even more widely inclusive. Is Big Whiskey, and all who live there, less redeemable than the town of Lago in *High Plains Drifter*? The question doesn't arise. "I'll see you in hell, William Munny", says the dying Little Bill, but we're not encouraged to think that Big Whiskey, like Lago, could stand in here and now for hell. It's no better or worse than could be expected, or as Munny sums it up for his younger companion, turning a sense of religious doom into mere pragmatism: "We all have it comin', kid". Perhaps the dry-goods enterprise Munny escapes to is the closest thing possible to redemption; and probably it became as neat and efficient an operation as Eastwood's tightly run Malpaso company. The connection is not as farfetched as it sounds. As Eastwood has put it, explaining his work ethic in terms of his family's hard times during the Depression: "My dad's dream was to have a hardware store. I'm his son".

'Unforgiven' opens on 18 September and is reviewed on page 58 of this issue

HOMAGE TO PECKINPAH

Hollywood screenwriter Lem Dobbs celebrates 'Unforgiven' as a break from a corrupt present

Justly hailed as 'classic', but for all the wrong reasons, *Unforgiven* isn't a break with the past, only with the dreadful present. While the critics fall over themselves declaiming the film as 'revisionist', the rest of us exit the theatre in elation that things are as they used to be. Clint Eastwood's triumph is to have made a film about triumph more successfully than a thousand Hollywood failures of the past feel-good decade, with their asinine freeze-frame endings of raised arms and fists in the air.

It is significant that David Peoples' original script was written in the 70s, in a vastly different Hollywood, when sophistication and professionalism in screenwriting were at their peak rather than their lowest ebb, before the plague of 'development' executives at film companies poisoned the creative process and gave new meaning to the phrase 'mechanical reproduction'. Everything good writing used to consist of is here in abundance: foreshadowing, irony, symmetry and symbolism (Hackman's hollow sense of 'home'), dialogue that means much more than it says. From the beginning theme is tied to action (the whore's client turns violent because his 'manhood' is mocked) and action to character. One is left with the rare impression not of the first thing that came into the writer's head, but the last, after he'd enriched the first with fresh insight, with memorable detail (the names are so good).

Clint Eastwood, one of the few film-makers excused the tawdry dictates of present Hollywood practice, held this wonderful screenplay in

reserve for years before he was ready to make it, thereby ensuring its beautifully anachronistic adherence to an earlier, uncorrupted set of movie-making standards. These include an unhurried pace that seems prescribed by the story, not by a 'story editor'; a star vehicle that nonetheless grants uncommon screen time to a full gallery of supporting players (the Richard Harris character would by today's 'rules' be considered inessential); and a director who doesn't merely photograph scenes but evokes them through such old-hat devices as camera placement, composition, and movement within the frame. Given its cast, its mood, above all its quality, *Unforgiven* plays like an unaccountably shelved work we're now privileged to see, as if in a period of freedom following an era of totalitarianism. Its greatest strength is how it informs and above all is informed by the past.

Unforgiven perfectly pursues the traditional blurring strategies of the popular Hollywood film. The 'hero' is a domesticated outlaw who dreams of his former violent life. The 'villain' is a violent lawman who dreams of a home. The whores, society's outcasts, demonstrate traditional family values, while Hackman's hollow homebuilder deserves to be 'shot' (the dime novelist dangerously jokes) for his leaky roof.

While it's almost unforgivable that Eastwood, having recently 'played' John Huston, should almost lift the title of a Huston film (a Western, no less) for his own, one fears what the film's reception might have been had the script's original title (*The Cut-Whore*

Killings) been retained in this sappy critical climate, where moral, rather than aesthetic, judgment prevails. Aesthetic judgment, alas, demands some small acquaintanceship with the past – a country become so foreign to contemporary film hacks it might as well be Shangri-la for all its apparent inaccessibility. How ironic that a film's content can be recognised as an elegy to bygone days while its formal beauties can no longer be seen in an historical context.

Many have greeted Gene Hackman's terrific turn as a brutal tyrant with a measure of surprise. Haven't they seen *Prime Cut*, *The Split*, *The Hunting Party*? More than one critic has taken a (truly gratuitous) potshot at the cinema's most maligned practitioner, Sam Peckinpah – that 'glorifier' of violence.

But if anything, *Unforgiven* is a homage to Peckinpah. The glance-back-over-the-shoulder-from-horseback that is one of *The Wild Bunch*'s most haunting images is here repeated. The music is by Lennie Niehaus, who apprenticed as orchestrator to the late, great Jerry Fielding, the composer shared by Eastwood and Peckinpah (or shared by Peckinpah with Eastwood). And Richard Harris portrays a version of the character he played in *Major Dundee* (a defender of aristocracy over democracy). As early as *Hand on the Gun*, an episode of his ground-breaking television series *The Westerner*, Peckinpah was demonstrating the awesome and tragic consequences that result every time a gun is drawn.

As if to ridicule the most cherished belief of the studio lackey that the

essence of drama is character change, the character revelation of Clint the protagonist and Clint the movie star is to stop kidding himself that he 'ain't like that any more' and be more like that than ever. Far from being the anti-heroic dirge it's being made out to be, *Unforgiven*'s happy ending is resolutely in keeping with the conventions of the Western showdown and the persona of the most enduring screen icon since John Wayne. (Clint in the finale is even backed by the American flag.) Reviewers who smugly note that he rides off into the dark and rain obviously didn't stay to read the final crawl over the sunset that suggests that the character, after his release through violence, went on to become a successful merchant (at the start he was wallowing in the mire with diseased hogs).

Whereas Huston's *The Unforgiven* truly was a 'revisionist' Western and consequently a box-office flop, Eastwood's *Unforgiven* is being taken for one, despite its wide acceptance by the American public – not known for their eagerness to embrace deviations from the norm – and despite the blessed link to tradition epitomised by the film's real conclusion: the dedication to "Sergio and Don". But what's tradition to born-yesterday critics to whom the Western motif of the 'outhouse' is no longer a genre signpost (*The Missouri Breaks*, *Monte Walsh*, *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid* and many other apparently forgotten films) but a symbol to be misread as 'inglorious'.

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OUT OF THE GHETTO

With the recent release of 'Juice' and 'Straight Out of Brooklyn', Michael Eric Dyson reflects on the fusion of ghetto and cultural nationalism, rap music and male youth in recent African-American cinema

● Matty Rich's *Straight Out of Brooklyn* (1991) is a desolate rejection of the logic of liberal democracy: that individuals can act to realise themselves and enhance their freedom through the organs of the community or the state. For the inhabitants of Brooklyn's Red Hook housing project, the possibilities of self-realisation are infinitely reduced by the menacing ubiquity of the ghetto. The suppressed premise of Rich's film is a rebuke to all pretensions that the ghetto is not a totalising force, that it is possible to maintain the boundaries between geography and psychic health implied by the expression: live in the ghetto, but don't let the ghetto live in you. It is precisely in showing that the ghetto survives parasitically – that its limits are as small or as large as the bodies it inhabits and destroys – that *Straight Out of Brooklyn* achieves a distinct voice among black filmmakers, while establishing the film's thematic continuity with black popular culture's exploration of black urban (male) identities.

After disappearing for a while from the intellectual gaze of the American academy, and being obscured from mainstream view by the narcissism of *nouveau riche* yuppies and the fragile gains of an increased black middle class, the ghetto has made a comeback at the scene of its defeat. The re-invention of American popular culture by young African-American artists is fuelled by paradox: now they have escaped the artistic ghetto that once suffocated the achievements of their predecessors, black artists have re-invented the urban ghetto through a nationalist aesthetic strategy that joins racial naturalism and romantic imagination. That the most

recent phase of black nationalism is cultural rather than political suggests the extent to which the absorption of radical dissent into mainstream politics has been successful, and expresses the hunger of black juvenile culture for the intellectual sources of its feral re-mix of pride and anger.

Mostly anger, and little pride, stirs in the fragmented lives of teenager Dennis Brown, his younger sister, Carolyn, and their parents, Frankie and Ray. Each in his mind and her own way is the prisoner of an existential and ecological misery so great that its pervasive presence would suggest the impossibility of charting its effects and differentiating its impact across the strands of the community.

Redeeming black masculinity

The exception to this apparently equally shaded misery is the extraordinarily acute condition of black men, seen first in the cinematic chiaroscuro of Ray's descent into a Dantean hell of racial agony so grotesque that its bleakness is a sadistic comfort, a last stop before absurdity turns to insanity. Ray's decline is suffered stoically by Frankie, a doleful throwback to an era when the black-woman-as-suffering-servant role was forced on black women by black men forced themselves to pay obeisance to white society, so that when they came home, they expected to claim the privileges of masculinity denied them in the white world. The only other model of black women was an equally punitive (and mythic) black matriarchy that both damned and praised them for an alleged strength of character absent in their



feckless male counterparts. Thus the logic of black communities ran: as the black man's fate goes, so goes the fate of the family.

Straight Out of Brooklyn's implicit narrative line ties generously into the fabric of this ideological framework, drawing its dramatic punch from the furious catastrophes that sweep down on its black male characters, the defining centre of the film's raw meditation on the angst of emasculation. Ray's too-frequent beatings of Frankie are rituals of self-immolation, her brutally bloodied countenance a tangential sign of his will to redefine the shape of his agony by redefining the shape of her face. Moreover, Ray's suffering-as-emasculation is further sealed by his denial of desire for white women during a Lear-like verbal jousting with an imaginary white man, a *deus ex machina* produced by his search for an explanation of his suffering, and a dramatic ploy by Rich that ascribes black suffering to the omnipotent white bogeyman. And Dennis' soliloquies in the presence of his girlfriend, Shirley (Reana E. Drummond), about his quest for capital to reverse his family's collapse belie a deeper need to redeem black masculinity by displaying his virility, his goal to be the man who successfully provides for his family, allied disastrously with his gratuitous desires to 'get paid'.

'Boyz N the Hood'

A different tack was pursued in *Boyz N the Hood* (1991), John Singleton's neo-realist representation of the black working-class ghetto neighbourhood. Abjuring the heavy-handed approach of negative racial didacticism, Single-

ton retraced instead the lineaments of the morality play in recognisable black cultural form, alluding richly to black particularity while keeping his film focused on *The Message*: black men must raise black boys if they are to become healthy black men. Thus Tre, Ricky and Doughboy are the film's interpretive centre, and Brandi, Reva and Shalika its periphery. Singleton's film – as is the case with most cultural responses to black male crisis – is an attempt to answer Marvin Gaye's plea to save the babies, while focusing his lens specifically on the male baby that he and many others believe has been thrown out with the bath water to float up the river, like Doughboy and one out of four black men, into the hands of the prison warden.

Singleton's moral premise, like so many claims of black male suffering, rests dangerously on ideas of black male salvation at the expense of black female suffering; black male autonomy at the cost of black female subordination; black male dignity at the cost of black female infirmity. Once and for all, Singleton's film jarred to visibility the inadvertent and unseemly alliance between black cultural nationalists and the cultured despisers of black women. His implicit swipe at black women ceded too much ideological territory and argued too little with white and black conservative social scientists, who lament the demise of American culture in the lethal embrace of welfare queens and promiscuous black women. Furious' brilliant presence as a redemptive and unswerving North Star, and Reva's uncertain orbit as a dim satellite, is the telling contrast.

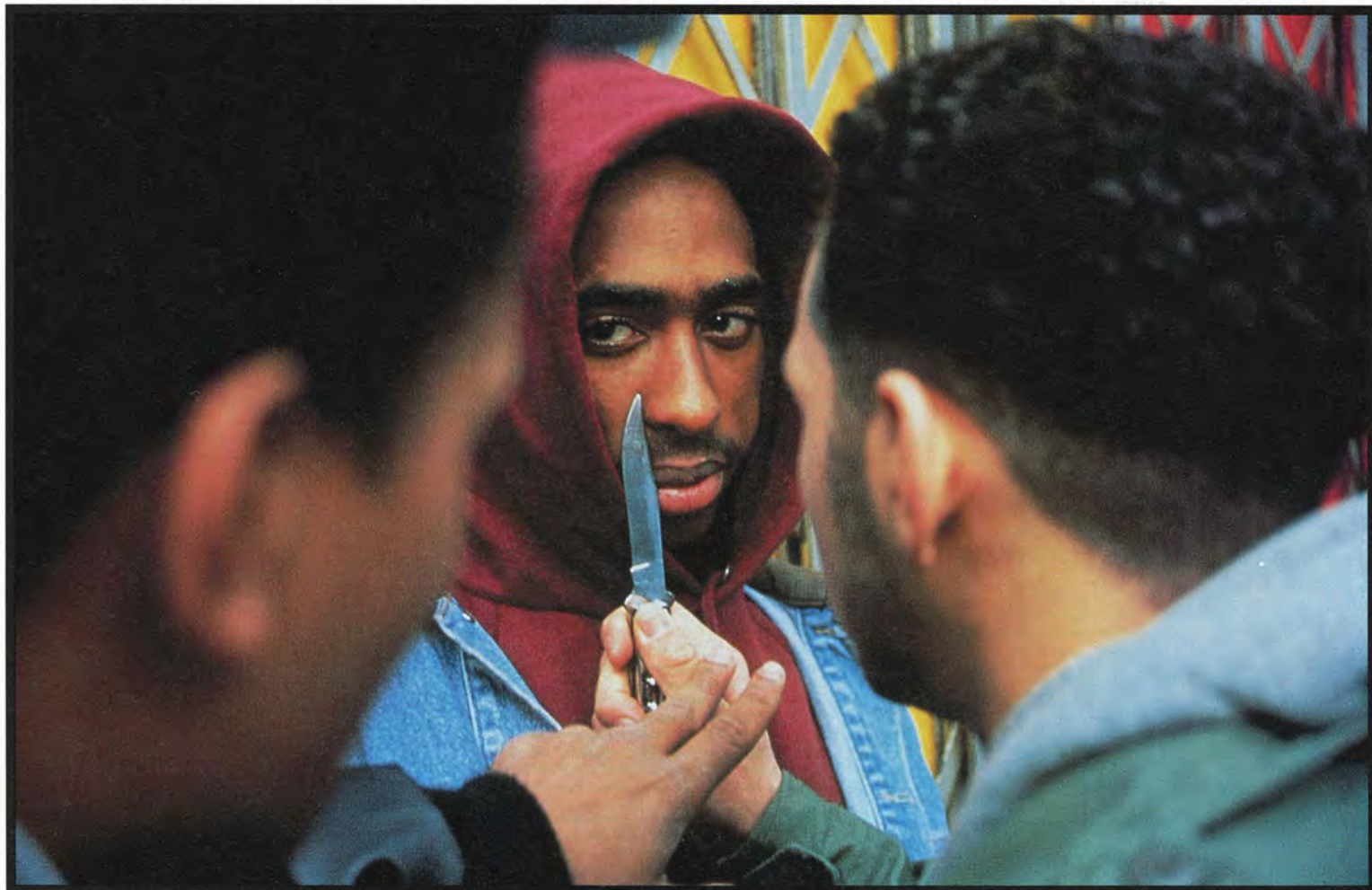
This premise would seem anachronistic, the

warmed-up leftovers of the black macho posturing of 60s nationalist discourse, were it not for its countless updates in black juvenile culture, reified to perfection in rap lyrics that denounce the racist dominance of white men, while glorifying without irony black male material dominance and sexual mastery of black female life. Of course, the quest for black manhood is everywhere apparent – note its evocation in the upper climes of bourgeois respectability as the implicit backdrop of Clarence Thomas' claim of perfidy by Anita Hill, the innuendo of his charge only faintly arrested in the racial code of his undertone: another sister pulling a brother down. But it is with the re-emergence of the ghetto in popular culture, and its prominence in a revived black nationalist cultural politics, that for better and worse the images of black masculinity find a discursive home.

This is especially true of film and rap music. The politics of cultural nationalism has re-emerged precisely as the escalation of racist hostility has been redirected to poor black people. Given the crisis of black bourgeois political leadership, and a greater crisis of black liberal social imagination about the roots of black suffering, black nationalist politics re-emerges as the logical means of resistance. Viewed against this backdrop, black film and rap music are the apotheosis of a black populist aesthetic.

Rap music has grown from its origins in ►

It's a family affair: Dennis, Kevin and Larry (played by the director) in Matty Rich's 'Straight Out of Brooklyn', opposite; the violent gang world of Ernest Dickerson's 'Juice', below



◀ New York's inner city over a decade ago, as a musical outlet for creative cultural energies and a way of contesting the invisibility of the ghetto in mainstream society. Rap remythologised New York's status as the spiritual centre of black America, inverting the terms of the Harlem Renaissance by asserting appropriation and splicing (not originality) as the artistic strategies by which the styles and sensibilities of black ghetto youth would gain popular influence. Rap developed as a relatively independent expression of black male artistic rebellion against the black bourgeois worldview, tapping instead into the cultural virtues and vices of the so-called underclass, romanticising the ghetto as the root of cultural identity and authenticity, the site of legitimate masculinity and racial unity.

'New Jack City'

The sensibilities afforded by the hip-hop aesthetic have found expression in many recent black films. Mario Van Peebles' *New Jack City*, for instance, is rife with the fusion of attitude and style as the replacement of substantive politics and the cultural mediation of choice for young black males, especially those profiting from the underground economy of crack. Similar to *Boyz n the Hood*, with Ice Cube, and Ernest Dickerson's *Juice* with Tupac Shakur (Bishop), *New Jack City* appeals directly to the iconic surplus of hip-hop culture by drawing upon rapper, Ice-T, to convey the film's poorly argued message: crime doesn't pay.

Thus Ice-T's "new jack cop" is an inside joke, a hip-hop reconfiguration of the tales of terror Ice-T explodes on wax as a lethal pimp, dope-dealer and bitch-hater. The adoption of the interchangeable persona as the prerogative of mood and message in the culture of hip hop is taken to its extreme with Ice-T: even though he appears as a cop in *New Jack City*, his appearance on the soundtrack as a rapper detailing his exploits as a criminal blurs the distinctions between cops and robbers and criminalises the redemptive intent of his film character (even more so retroactively in light of the recent controversy over his hit *Cop Killer*, recorded with his speed metal band).

Van Peebles' cinematic choices in *New Jack City* expose the vocabulary of excessive cultural representation that characterised many ghetto movies of old. Van Peebles' ghetto is a sinister and languid dungeon of human filth and greed drawn equally from cartoon and camp. Its artifice is meant to convey the inhuman consequences of living in this enclave of civic horror, but its overdrawn dimensions reveal a cinematic pedigree traced more easily to 70s blaxploitation flicks than to the neo-realist portrayal of carnage presented in other recent black ghetto films.

As a gangster film, *New Jack City* provides the Cagneyisation of black ghetto life, the inexorable forces of woman-bashing and partner-killing sweeping the hidden icon of the people to a position larger than life. Thus Nino Brown reigns because he tests the limits of the American Dream, a Horatio Alger in black face who pulls himself up by forging consensus among his peers that his life is a ghetto jeremiad, in a

strident protest against the unjust limits imposed on black male flourishing.

But it is the state of black male love that is the story's unnarrated plot, its twisted pursuit tragically trumped by boys seeking to become men by killing each other. Thus when a crying Nino clasps his teary-eyed closest friend and partner in crime, Gee Money, on top of the apartment building that provides the *mise en scène* for the proverbial ode to an empire destroyed by undisciplined ambition, he avows his love even as he fills Gee Money's belly with steel as recompense for his disloyalty. It is the tough love of the gang in action, the logic of vengeance passing as justice in gang love's fulfilment of its unstated obligations.

The mostly black and Latino gang, of course, has also recaptured the interest of American social theory and journalism in the past decade. Urban sociologists such as Terry Williams in New York and Mike Davis in Los Angeles have written insightfully about the economic and social conditions that have led to the emergence of contemporary black and Latino gang culture, citing especially the yearning for love and social acceptance that animates such aggregation. Model-turned-journalist Leon Bing has interviewed in Los Angeles gang members who speak eloquently about their lives in words as moving for their emotional directness as for their honesty about the need for affection and comfort that drives them together. In *Straight Out of Brooklyn* and *Juice*, the theme of black male love in the ghetto filtered through the prism of gang association looms large.

'Straight Out of Brooklyn'

In *Straight Out of Brooklyn*, Rich presents a loosely associated group of black male teens, including Dennis, Kevin and Larry (played by Rich), who are frustrated by poverty and the closure of personal and vocational horizons that lack of money has come to signify. Whereas in *Juice*, the crushing consequences of the absence of capital are skilfully explored through the inter-

actions between the characters, in *Brooklyn*, the power of money is signified more crudely in the representation of the material and sexual icons that dominate the dreams expressed by Dennis and his friends: big cars, more money, and mo' ho's.

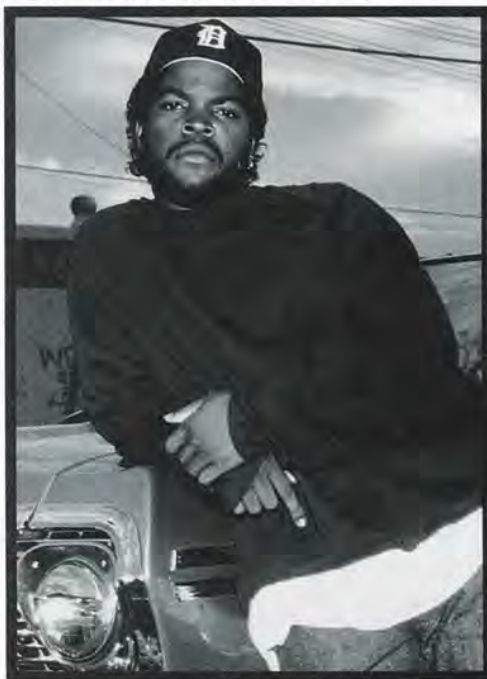
The lifelessness of the ghetto is reified in the textu(r)al construction through which the movie comes to us: although it's in colour, the film seems eerily black and white, its crude terms of representation established by its harsh video quality. Of course, the film's unavoidable amateur rawness is its premise of poignancy: after all, this is art imitating life, the vision of a nineteen-year-old Brooklyn youth – with little financial aid beyond the last-minute gift of film roll from Jonathan Demme – committing his life to film. This is the closest derivation in film of the guerrilla methods of hip hop, the projection of will – on to an artistic canvas constituted of the rudimentary elements of one's life – in the guise of vision and message.

In *Straight Out of Brooklyn*, the triumvirate of teens is not a roving, menacing crew engaging in the business of selling crack rock and duplicating capitalism's excesses on their native terrain. Rather, they are forced by desperation to a momentary relief of their condition by robbing a dope-dealer, an impulse that is routinised in the crack gang, whose rituals of gun play and murder feed on the lives of opponents out to seize their turf. The anomie and alienation produced by everyday forms of capitulation to despair, and the spiralling violence of Ray, force Dennis away from his family to the affectionate camaraderie of Larry and Kevin, and Shirley. All other hints of family are absent, save Larry's barber uncle, who unwittingly provides the ill-named get-away car for their ill-fated heist. The vacuum at home for Dennis is made more obvious by Ray's attempt to preserve the remnants of a 'traditional' family, angrily reminding Dennis after he misses dinner that his empty plate symbolises his membership of the family. But Rich shatters this icon into shards of ironic judgment on the nuclear family, as Ray himself breaks dishes and beats Frankie each time he becomes intoxicated.

Dennis' only relief is Shirley and his crew. When Shirley disappoints him by refusing to buy into his logic about escape from the ghetto by robbery, he turns to his crew, who, in the final analysis, leave Dennis to his own wits when they agree they have stolen too much cash ("killing money", Kevin says) from the local dope-dealer, an act whose consequences roll back on Dennis in bitter irony when the heist leads to his father's death. The film's dismal conclusion is that black men cannot depend on each other or on their own dreams to find a way past mutual destruction.

'Juice'

The crew in *Juice* is more tightly organised than in *Straight Out of Brooklyn*, though their activity, too, is not regularised primarily for profit. Their salient function is as a surrogate family, their substitute kinship formed from their protection of each other from rival gangs, and the camaraderie and social support their association brings. But trouble penetrates the group



Losing ground: Doughboy in John Singleton's *'Boyz n the Hood'*

when the gangster ambitions of Bishop threaten their equanimity. Of all the crew – leader Raheem, a teen father; GQ, a DJ with ambitions to refine his craft; and Steel, a likeable youth who is most notably the ‘follower’ – Bishop is the one who wants to take them to the next level, to make them like the hardcore gangsters he watches on television.

Viewing Cagney's famed ending in *White Heat*, and a news bulletin announcing the death of an acquaintance as he attempted armed robbery, Bishop rises to proclaim Cagney's and their friend's oneness, lauding their commendable bravado in taking their fate into their own hands and remaking the world on their own terms. Dickerson's aim is transparent: to highlight the link between violence and criminality fostered in the collective American imagination by television, a medium whose images have replaced the Constitution and Declaration of Independence as the unifying fictions of national citizenship and identity. Television is also the sole occupation of Bishop's listless father, a reminder that its influence unfolds from its dulling effects on one generation to its creation of lethal desires in the next, twin strategies of destruction when applied to the black male ghetto.

Like the teens in *Straight Out of Brooklyn*, *Juice*'s crew must endure the fatal consequences of their failed attempt at getting paid and living large, the repeated mantras of material abundance in the lexicon of hip hop. After Bishop's determination to seize immortality leads him to kill without provocation the owner of the store they rob, the terms of his Faustian bargain are more clearly revealed when he then kills Raheem, destroying all claims of brotherhood with a malicious act of machismo, succeeding to Raheem's throne through murder.

Dickerson, who has beautifully photographed all Spike Lee's films, uses darker hues in *Juice*, but nothing approaching the drained coloured canvas on which *Straight Out of Brooklyn* is drawn. Dickerson's moral strategy is to elaborate to its fatal ends the contradictory logic of the gang as a family unit – a faulty premise as far as he is concerned, in that it overlooks the lack of moral constraints that mean that the gang ultimately does not work without destructive consequences. His aesthetic strategy is to move the camera with the action from the observer's frame of reference, borrowing a few pages from Lee's book without mimicking Lee's panache for decentring the observer through unusual angles and the fast pace of the editing. Like Rich in *Straight Out of Brooklyn*, Dickerson wants the impact of his message to hit home; but he employs a less harsh method, a gentler but still insistent drawing into his moral worldview, an invitation to view the spectacle of black male loss of love by degrees and effects.

The working-class ghetto family in *Juice* is much more visible and vital than in *Straight Out of Brooklyn*. Mothers and fathers wake their children in the morning for breakfast and make certain they take their books to school. The extended family is even given a nice twist when GQ fetches a gun from one of his mother's old friends, a small-time neighbourhood supplier.



After blaxploitation: Ice-T in Van Peebles' 'New Jack City'

And Dickerson draws attention subtly to the contrasts between the aesthetic and moral worldviews of the generations, and the thriving of an earlier era's values among the younger generation, at the dinner at Raheem's family's house after Raheem's funeral.

As snatches of gospel music float gently through the house, GQ and Steel pay their respects to Raheem's family. But when Bishop arrives, the rupture between generational values forces to the surface the choice each of the remaining three crew must make. GQ and Steel are offended at Bishop's effrontery, his mean-spirited and near-demented hypocrisy leading him to violate Raheem's memory with this latest act of unbridled machismo and hubris. For them, the choice is clear. The religious values signified in the gospel music no longer seem foreign, providing a gentle counterpoint to the hip-hop aesthetic of violent metaphors in the service of greater self-expression. Unlike the black teens in *Straight Out of Brooklyn*'s ghetto, the black males here can depend on one another, but only after being forced to acknowledge their debt to the moral infrastructure supplied by a predecessor culture, and only after discovering the limits of their freedom in destructive alliance with each other.

Spike Lee's 'Malcolm X'

The contemporary debate within black culture about black film and its enabling or destructive representations of black males, and the consequent representations of black females, started with the meteoric rise of Spike Lee. With Lee's groundbreaking *She's Gotta Have It* (1986), young black men laid hold of a cultural and artistic form – the Hollywood film – from which they had with rare exception previously been barred. In gaining access to film, young black men began to seize interpretive and representational authority from ostensibly ignorant or insensitive cultural elites whose cinematic portrayals of blacks were the ridiculously bloated or painfully shrivelled disfigurements of black life seen from outside black culture. Lee's

arrival promised a new day, beyond stereotype.

What we get with Lee is Jungian archetype, frozen snapshots of moods in the black (male) psyche. Lee's mission to represent the various strands of black life denied cinematic outlet has led him to resolve the complexity of black culture into rigid categories that deny his characters' contradictory rumblings towards authentic humanity. After *She's Gotta Have It*, black women became mere clues to the exploration of black male bonding rituals (*School Daze*, 1988); the negotiation of black male styles of social resistance (*Do the Right Thing*, 1989); the expansion of black male artistic ambitions (*Mo' Better Blues*, 1990); and the resolution of black male penis politics (*Jungle Fever*, 1991).

It is Lee's cinematic representations of black male life that have occasioned the proleptic criticism of his latest and most important project: his forthcoming film biography of Malcolm X. Writer and social critic Amiri Baraka has entered a war of words with Lee, claiming that Lee's poor history of representing black man suggests that he will savage the memory of Malcolm X, a memory, by the way, that Baraka presumes to have privileged access to. This battle between the two diminutive firebrands, ironic for its poignant portrayal of the only logical outcome of the politics of more-black-nationalist-than-thou – a game Lee has played with relish on occasion – is but a foretaste of the war of interpretation to come.

Malcolm X is the reigning icon of black popular culture, his autobiography the Ur-text of contemporary black nationalism. His legacy is claimed by fiercely competing groups within black America, a fact certain to make Lee's film a hard sell to one faction or the other. More importantly, X's complex legacy is just now being opened to wider cultural scrutiny, and his hagiographers and haters will rush forward to have their say once again.

To many, Malcolm is black manhood squared, the unadulterated truth of white racism ever on his tongue, the black unity of black people ever on his agenda, the black-people-in-ghetto pain ever on his mind. Thus the films that represent the visual arm of black nationalism's revival bear the burden of his presence in every frame, his philosophy touching every aspect of the issues they deal in – drugs, morality, religion, ghetto life, and especially, the conditions of being a black man. For many, as for his eulogist Ossie Davis, Malcolm was the primordial, quintessential Real Man.

But as with the films of Dickerson, Lee, Rich, Singleton and Van Peebles, this spells trouble for black women, and for an enabling vision of black masculinity that moves beyond the worst traits of X's sexism, gestures of which survive in the short hereafter he enjoyed upon his escape from Elijah Muhammad's ideological strait-jacket. Malcolm's split from the Nation of Islam demanded a powerful act of will and self-reinvention, an unsparing commitment to truth over habit. Perhaps Lee's film will likewise reflect this Malcolm. This could be one of its great achievements, an enduring contribution to black men everywhere, in the ghetto, and alas, on the Supreme Court.

'*Straight Out of Brooklyn*' is reviewed on page 55



Raymond Durgnat, below, and others, overleaf, talk about meeting Powell, and his films and achievements, on the publication of 'Million Dollar Movie'

REMEMBERING MICHAEL POWELL

● I was all set to give a little talk on Powell at the National Film Theatre. Having prepared a startling topic – would you believe Powell vs Pasolini? – I beheld the subject of my lecture sitting in the front row, calm, curious, affable, mischievous.

I'd known him only from his films. But just to meet an auteur in the flesh promptly kills some ideas stone dead, starts off others, and sets your mind reconfiguring the two or three things you had previously construed. Like Olsen and Johnson in *Hellzapoppin'*, I tore whole pages out of my script and extemporised away until my last sentence, which was "... and I don't know quite what to make of that". My presentation ended well before time, for once, and Powell basked in the lively discussion and the thunderclaps of ideological struggle rolling over his head. When I dug up my old theory of his fascination with the demonic, he just replied, "No", in a placid, firm, definitive way, like the stonewall "Why?" made famous by David Lean's Powell impersonations. Later, he said quietly, "Some of my work was once compared to...", and he paused, head lifted as if listening afar, mouth half-pursed, half-cherubic, like a rose, "Kipling...", enfolding the name with, not bated breath exactly, but a dropped tone of awe and satisfaction, as if in the presence of the stern master, he the loyal truant.

In a restaurant later he embellished a story recounted in *Million Dollar Movie*: for *Gone to Earth*, Korda had suggested faking the foxes by unleashing corgis with feather dusters tied to their tails. Powell chortled for what felt like five minutes, continuously, but evenly, highlights gleaming on his rosy cheeks, a physically beautiful balance of freshness and control. Clearly he was thinking through the visual nuances of the scene, emblematic, somehow, of his inspiration.

We met a few times more, once in Finnish Lapland at the Festival of the Midnight Sun. By then, his sight was so bad that Thelma Schoonmaker had to describe for him the food on his plate. To introduce his films, he'd memorised the steps down to the stage. As the

blurred warmth of the lights fell across his face, his performance, immaculate and precise, reached out like a grandfatherly embrace, spare but efficacious.

He had just begun unleashing in Anglophone critics the sorts of affection that Renoir tapped in *Cahiers du cinéma*. It's as if each generation loves, in a selected grandfather, the traditions it deplors in its fathers and simultaneously revels in the discovery of new freedoms in the very things its own fathers rebelled against. Though things aren't quite so simple now, since the intervention of Marxism, which has had contemporary grooves of academe deploring the 'national culture' with a passion worthy of a better cause. Often theorists rationalise their guilty pleasures by presuming Powell's art to be 'subversive', or by seeing *Peeping Tom* as a demonstration of cinema's sado-scopic drives (as if that made bourgeois culture more guilty and themselves less), or by investing Powell's appearance in a film about Aleister Crowley with overblown meaning, so as to surround him with sulphur.

His first volume of autobiography, *A Life in Movies* (1986), established everything that was antithetical about him: his deep roots in an Edwardian-cum-Georgian gentleman-farmer's life, his man-about-town hedonism in the 30s (so unlike the disapproving poets), his wartime patriotism, and his post-war exoticism. Powell was, is, a *de luxe* avant-gardist, individualistic within a national cultural spirit: like Old Vic/Sadlers Wells theatre/ballet culture, like Gance, like Dreyer. Which makes him all the more interesting, and all the less stereotyped.

From 1950 he seemed to fall between an old and new spirit, and in *ALIM* (his love of acronyms is contagious) one sensed him groping as to which reader to address and therefore what to say. *ALIM* was one-third film book, one-third travel adventure and one-third personal rumination. Indispensable overall, wonderful in parts, it woolgathers all over the map, needing a bland but drastic editorial job, like David Lean's book on *The 49th Parallel*.

One feared for the second part, *Million Dollar Movie*, entirely dictated and bound to tackle its author's decline and fall, a thorny topic which could have led to all kinds of schmalz, evasion of libel and every other showbiz ploy. But Powell's second shot lands in, or near, the gold. It centres squarely on the films. It's tightly edited on the whole and perhaps improved by dictation. For film, like drama generally, is much closer to spoken culture, to 'spinning a yarn', which is a performance art, than to written texts which are not time-based.

Despite its cheapo title, *Million Dollar Movie* bears rich witness to artists at work. The lean years after 1951 turn out to have bristled with fascinating projects, as Powell all but brought off a fusion of cinema and highbrow modernism. Here we have Powell and Stravinsky matching each other's quotations from Dylan Thomas; Powell plotting collaborations between Matisse and Matisse, between Graham Sutherland and Georges Simenon, even between Marks & Spencer and Israeli national leaders (for an intellectual-national epic about Chaim Weizmann). Here we have Sir Thomas Beecham bustling *The Archers* through Offenbach; Powell and Shearer achieving the ideal creative partnership, i.e., "based not upon love, but upon suspicion and fear"; versions of William Sansom and Victoria Sackville-West; a promising project collapsing when Pressburger shocks Michael Frayn and Powell verbally slaps Peter Sellers.

The accounts of artistic collaboration, often done as dramatic scripts, are not deep analyses, but something as precious and much rarer – a sense of how ideas knock on, ricochet, dance tangent tangos through all spirits present. There's careful practical analysis, too, and an inside view of industry history: of how and why *The Archers* broke up, how very nearly Powell and John Davis buried their legendary hatchet; of Powell, aged sixty, learning on the job how to peddle *They're A Weird Mob* to Australia cinema managers.

His gifts as a gossip rival John Aubrey's in *Brief Lives*, but with more fulsome detail. We get front-row seats for Jennifer Jones in hysterical, helpless and drunken rebellion against Selznick's *amour fou* for her (what an obsession story theirs would, will, make). We read letters from Siobhan McKenna, lamenting Powell's having the mind of, not a Roman Catholic, but "a Canterbury Protestant".

Film theorists will find cues and clues galore for new mutations. Between auteurism, with the great director as great dictator, and structuralism, in which the director is but an intersection point on a socio-ideological grid, maybe there is room for 'collaboration theory' – a fine can of worms – and where better to start than with Powell's box of surprises? Who could have guessed that Pressburger, the writer, not Powell, the pictorialist, conceived in *The Tales of Hoffmann* the breathtaking cross-fade from clockworks springing out of Moira Shearer's

head to languorous ripples in a Venetian lagoon? That Powell knew not much about the battle of the River Plate until a German navy man told Pressburger, who told him? That for Powell the arch-colourist, only black and white properly displays the structures of landscape?

The brisker our deconstruction drill becomes, the more we need to relearn an appreciation of beauties à la Sainte-Beuve. To appreciate, in this heightened sense, the thinking behind *The Elusive Pimpernel* transforms it from a lame duck with a dodo brain into – a lame swan. Powell himself, although in some ways prone to self-indulgence, was also impossibly exigent, for instance, when he writes of Kathleen Byron in *The Small Back Room*, "only in her brief scenes with Michael Gough did I capture the flutter of an angel's wings". His strange mixtures of the clinical and the sensitive give rise to many such unpredictable judgments.

All in all, Powell is honestly self-critical about his career errors and his far from exemplary behaviour (he even calls himself his wife's executioner) – all of which he reviews with a commendable lack of guilt. He understands other people of both sexes, rather well, when he wants to, in that brisk Edwardian way that's more to do with animal psychology than with Freud. But his ruthless innocence about people's vulnerability can amaze, as he flits like a butterfly and stings like a hornet. His tartness was military, without malice, but its patrician quality, its sudden emergence from mellow team spirit, made it more memorable than perhaps he realised.

Million Dollar Movie's mixture of the intimate and the remote, the terse and the elliptical, raises in a useful way most of the problems of the autobiographical genre. Like history generally, it qualifies as 'realism', but can never become 'the whole truth' or even truth 'in the round', except by dint of speculation, hypotheses, invention and the testimony of other people, which makes it tantamount to 'imaginative literature', sometimes, indeed, to fiction, on the understanding that true confessions would embarrass one's loved ones, one's lawyers and oneself. 'The way it was' gets reshaped further by recollection in tranquillity, hindsight and wisdom. And autobiography is always *discourse*, i.e. performance, reshaped to what one's target audiences now ought to know.

There's no ideal solution, only several acceptable ones, and Powell's is of a fresh and vivid kind. Overall, *Million Dollar Movie* is a reliable witness in which many casual details dovetail with other testimony. My various cavils include the non-mention of his novel *A Waiting Game* (1975) and *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, a fascinating experiment. But that's less serious than the strange omission of anything about that deeply unfashionable masterpiece, *An Airman's Letter to His Mother*.

Lust for life or dance of death: Moira Shearer and Leonid Massine in 'The Red Shoes'



MARTIN SCORSESE

Film-maker

In the history of motion pictures, Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger occupy a very special place. They explored uncharted territories, established new boundaries and redefined the art of film-making. In that respect, they may also be considered great experimenters. They made experimental films within the industry. When I said as much once on stage, at the BFI, Michael said to me afterwards: "We were doing the movies. They were experimenting".

One of the reasons for this, I think, was that Michael began to work for Rex Ingram, his mentor, in silent films. I've always thought that silent cinema had a more direct link with pure emotions – as if the narrative and the *mise en scène* were expressly constructed to convey nothing but emotions, just image after image creating what Michael called "a miracle box". It was an era when cinema was continuously being reinvented.

Ultimately, Powell/Pressburger's major and most successful cinematic experiment was the 'composed film', best represented by *The Tales of Hoffmann*. Scenes were staged, designed and constructed in pursuit of an organic whole inspired by music. Colour was given a narrative function, creating moving paintings.

This is why, for me, the Powell/Pressburger films perform like symphonies. I can frequently play them and yet discover new things, enjoy their rich texture, their subtle nuances, their hysteria and grace. As a viewer, they make me feel I'm continuously rediscovering cinema.

MICHAEL FRAYN

Novelist and playwright

I still have a note, in an ancient list of ideas for literary projects, relating to a ride in a Bentley and a "hallucination of the 30s". I can't remember now what I had in mind, but in *Million Dollar Movie* Michael Powell describes the original ride – down to Surrey together in his "quivering black, open Bentley" to meet Peter Sellers, in the hope

of persuading him to star in a film version of my second novel, *The Russian Interpreter*.

This was in 1967. It was a cold, sunlit day at the beginning of February, and to my eyes, blurred probably by the quivering of the Bentley (tuned, he told me, by his own mechanic), certainly by the tears flowing out in the icy airstream, the passing world did seem to have reverted to Dornford Yates. I think Powell himself was wearing a leather flying helmet and goggles; they went very well with his neatly clipped moustache and his neatly clipped speech.

When we arrived I was a corpse, scarcely able to get out of the car or to speak, while he was as lively as ever – a dapper, bouncing peanut of a man, worldly and knowing, tremendously full of himself. He told you amazing things with a special, quiet, smiling casualness, but kept a wary eye on you to see how they were going down. You had the suspicion that you were in the middle of some kind of confidence trick. I felt enormously tall, and about seventeen years old.

In May we were off again, this time to Austria to meet Pressburger – as if Crosse were introducing one to Blackwell. We ran into an acquaintance of mine on the aeroplane who could not be shaken from his assumption that I was going to Munich as a reporter, to write about it for the *Observer*, and that Powell, who had several cameras around his neck, was my photographer. "I'm a film producer!", Powell explained to him several times, immensely nettled. "We're here to make a film!" My acquaintance smiled. There was something about me, or about Powell, or about the combination of us, that failed to convince.

Once we joined Pressburger, we became an even odder group. Pressburger was large and slow and unwell and cautious and melancholy – an old bloodhound around whom Powell bounced like a playful Jack Russell. We drank quarters of veltliner outside a local Weinstube in idyllic early spring greenery. Powell went off to fish the tumbling local river with an immensely fat doctor we'd met, who raced from one cast to the next

in a Volkswagen Beetle, with only a few centimetres left to fit Powell in beside him.

I can't really remember very much about our discussions. According to Powell, I "snorted" at Pressburger's suggestions, rang my agent, and flew back to London. I can't believe I did anything so definite – I was far too overawed simply by being in the joint presence of Huntley and Palmer – and in any case, Pressburger did subsequently write a draft screenplay.

I'm a little ashamed of myself, though, reading Powell's recollection of the episode. I don't think I took his enthusiasm for the project entirely seriously; it seemed merely a part of the general hallucination. But he writes about it with the same warmth and generosity he displayed then. In any case, a confidence trick, as I have since come to realise, is largely what film-making is.

KEVIN GOUGH-YATES

Writer and film historian

In October 1973, we wanted Powell's films to be the high point of the Brussels celebrations welcoming Britain into the EEC. He, self-effacingly, introduced each one, wanting them to speak for themselves. As the lights went down for *Peeping Tom*, he asked if I knew why he had used Rathbone Street. I didn't, but later discovered that he had shot his first film, *Two Crowded Hours*, there. He said, "Yes, I wanted it all to be circular". Our Belgian hosts loved *Peeping Tom*, but the head of our delegation, a great admirer of *A Touch of Class*, responded as the British press had done thirteen years earlier. The epithets were thick in the air and he showily turned his back on us. Powell took it as far for the course, looked at me and said, "We're near to Amsterdam. Why don't we take off for a couple of days".

We walked through the city, but he was exhausted and I noticed his legs buckle. I suggested we jump on a tram. "Oh, if you're tired", he said. The next morning he was as good as new. On the way to the Van Gogh museum, where he stood transfixed in front of one of the self-portraits, we made a courtesy call at the Nederlands Filmmuseum. His eyes lit up at the mention of *The Robber Symphony*, which he remembered seeing at the Palace Theatre and had led him towards *The Tales of Hoffmann*.

As tourists, we sat in cafés and talked, often about his disappointments. He despaired at seeing *The Tempest* made and had spent too much of his own money trying to set it up. He had found the most awe-inspiring locations and Gerald Scarfe had designed magnificent costumes. His cast included James Mason, Frankie Howerd and Malcolm McDowell. What did I think? I didn't know. I could appreciate his love of Hay Petrie but not his admiration for Anthony Quayle. Anyway, we never found out. We saw few films together,

other than his own. *Rashomon* and *Forbidden Planet* were exceptions, the latter, a derivative of *The Tempest*, forced on him by Kenneth Anger. He applauded and cheered *Rashomon*; he left *Forbidden Planet* in silence.

At the cottage, the last time we met, his eyesight seriously deteriorated, *Peeping Tom* came up again. Previously he said that he had noticed Leo Marks' contribution to *Carve Her Name With Pride* and sought him out. Now, he remembered, Danny Angel, the producer, had recommended him as a replacement for Pressburger. He had had great hopes for Leo, but the empathy was missing and, as always, he had returned to Emeric, his first love. I reflected on the irony of Powell directing the blind Esmond Knight as a film director called Arthur Baden. Columba, his son, talked of how uncomfortable he had felt watching Maxine Audley wearing his mother's jumpers.

RON PECK

Film-maker

Why was he, with Hitchcock, simply the greatest film-maker this country ever produced?

Isn't the opening of *A Matter of Life and Death* something of a clue? Camera scanning the universe, as awe-inspiring as Kubrick's 2001, Allan Gray's musical roar putting a chill down the spine. And then, out of nowhere, this terribly proper English voice trying to contain it all by lecturing the audience and referring to one constellation as looking "rather like a Boy Scout's badge".

The juxtaposition goes to the heart of Powell's work: the grand and the cosmic, the out-of-control, set against the confident proprietorial language of the English gent – more often than not David Farrar, Marius Goring, or Roger Livesey – doing its best to keep everything in smart order.

In *The Red Shoes* and *Black Narcissus* such hurricane passions and emotions are let loose in a storm of Technicolor and symphonic music as no Covent Garden Opera House or distant Himalayan convent could ever hope to contain; and these violent expressions can take only one course: they must flame up and die out, leaving us in the



A Matter of Life and Death (1946)



The Tales of Hoffmann (1951)

end with that same staid opera house and convent, colourless and empty, rather like present-day Britain without, any longer, a Michael Powell.

In 1976, when Paul Hallam and I began trying to raise finance to make *Nighthawks*, one of the many people who helped us and made representations on our behalf was Michael Powell. I was pretty knocked out by the fact that the director whose work I felt was by far the most exciting in British cinema could be so interested in our project. A correspondence between us was initiated by his first reaction to our script. The comments he made were, I think, as revealing of his own priorities and interests as of the shortcomings of our own rough draft. The letter is quoted in full:

Dear Mr Peck

I have read your new draft and you could certainly use it as a shooting script it is so successful in its descriptions of action, atmosphere, and emotions, I should have thought much more than a conventional shooting script. Don't you think that suspense is a necessary ingredient? Now that you have everything else? The pulse of the audience or reader quickens very slightly over whether there will be a love affair with Jim's fellow teacher: there is a slight feeling that Jim may get into trouble with the School authorities (and the scene of frankness with the children is very good) but you can't really call them suspense reactions they are so mild. You seem bent on avoiding a plot or a situation of risk or danger, and yet for the life of me I can't see why. Nor do I see why you have to be so explicit visually about the male love-making. The courtship and cruising are so strong and interesting, visually, that you can't top them. Who cares about the way you go about getting the satisfaction you have aroused. And the beauty of a male body seems to elude you... But that's beside the point. All you need now is a plot. There was a plot in *Blow-Up*: minuscule but there. And I assume you want a success like *Blow-Up* not a success like *[A Bigger]* *Splash* - *Cuckoo* has suspense from start to finish: it would never have made it otherwise. Don't be above (or below) plot. We are story-tellers not scientists. Michael



The Battle of the River Plate (1956)

SALLY POTTER

Film-maker

My favourite film by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger is *A Matter of Life and Death*. I was gratified to be told by Michael Powell, when I was fortunate enough to meet him in the years before his death, that it was his favourite, too.

The film remains unparalleled in its elegant structure, visionary use of black and white and colour, sense of scale and daring design, combined with the lightest touch about the potentially heaviest subject - death. In addition, in the courtroom scene, there is an unrivalled examination of the tangled relations between the US and Europe that manages to be radical, witty and compassionate.

I first met Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger after a screening of *Gone to Earth* at the London Film Festival, where I was deeply moved by their modesty, good humour and enduring love both for cinema and for each other. Subsequently I interviewed Michael Powell for a television film, and visited him and Thelma Schoonmaker in the Cotswolds and in New York. He had a generosity of spirit that allowed him both to sense the longing and to encourage the cinematic passions of others, despite (or perhaps because of) his own frustrations at the end of his career of not being able to work in the way he still dreamed of.

I remember him in a lovat-green tweed suit with a tie in the perfectly complementary shade of rust-red, with shiny apple-red cheeks and a straight back - exuding charm, patience and rigour. At his funeral I wept for our loss, for an ailing British film industry which seemed not to have fully recognised its mentor; and for the subtle workings of 'a night at the pictures' on our souls, which he understood so well and has left for us to enjoy and learn from forever.

LORD BRABOURNE

Executive producer

Although they had worked together for many years, Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger were entirely different types. Emeric was one of the most delightful, charming people one could possibly work with, whereas Micky was immensely self-opinionated and rather grand and, at times, very difficult indeed. However, none of this mattered as he was extraordinarily talented and had the most remarkable drive, which I greatly admired.

When, to my great surprise, he first asked me to be production manager on *The Battle of the River Plate* he had not yet got all the finance together and had finally taken the project to the Rank Organisation. There was a possibility of getting permission to shoot with the Mediterranean fleet, provided we could get a definite decision within a reasonably short time. It was decided that Emeric would remain in London to carry on

negotiations, while Micky set off with a few others, including myself, to discuss the project with the Commander-in-Chief and his staff. Micky was at his best at this time and we were promised full co-operation. We were also given tremendous help by the Admiralty in finding a US warship to take the part of the the *Graf Spee*.

It was an eye-opener to anyone interested in making films to see Micky at work in those circumstances. I have been grateful ever since for the amount I learned from both Micky and Emeric during the production of the film.

LEO MARKS

Screenwriter, *'Peeping Tom'*

Micky would have disliked being summed-up in 500 words unless they were his own.

"Mr Powell, I understand you're a tyrant! - I've met a great many so I hope we'll have fun", was my opening remark to him. "It depends", he said, "on what you're here to sell me". "Myself and the story of a voyeur, Mr Powell".

No one can claim to know Micky who hasn't phoned him with a problem at 3am. If it were difficult enough - like the pencils which fell from Peeping Tom's pocket to land like torpedoes a hundred feet below - he would talk until he'd resolved it, which he usually succeeded in doing in under five minutes. The falling pencils took ten. Anything less than impossible he regarded as an intrusion on his privacy.

He was as passionate about art and art books as he was about films. I supplied him with a script or two and my father - who owned 84 Charing Cross Road - supplied the bulk of his books. Whenever he visited the shop he wore his brown bowler hat as a mark of respect. I once introduced him to Helene Hanff (the author of *84 Charing Cross Road*) whom he greatly admired, and who loved all his films except *Peeping Tom*, but I must have been more than usually inaudible because they spent the meeting in complete ignorance of each other's identity.

He was fascinated by anything to do with the Resistance movement (he was

one himself) and knew that I'd been in charge of S.O.E.'s codes. He was an expert saboteur of people's self-confidence, and some of his brutality was deliberate. His contempt for mediocrity was the only mediocrity in his make-up, and he put many artists out of their misery by destroying them altogether if he considered that their talent deserved a verbal obituary notice. But he could also give them the kind of encouragement which would last for the rest of their lives.

My wife and I were two of the lucky ones. I'd written a poem-code during the war for Violette Szabo but wasn't sure if I should allow it to be used in a film called *Carve Her Name With Pride* as I couldn't judge its merits as a poem. Micky (the first person I'd shared it with other than Violette herself) insisted that I release it and also instructed me to publish the twenty-eight other poem-codes I'd written (but then he'd only heard two of them). My wife was in the final stages of painting George Thomas (now Lord Tonypandy), and like any good professional portraitist was afraid she hadn't done justice to her subject. Micky venerated George Thomas and I invited him to Elena's studio to inspect the unfinished painting. Wearing his bowler hat in honour of the occasion he stared at the portrait in silence for several agonising minutes and finally said, "He may be Speaker of the House of Commons but you've spoken for all of us". She finished the portrait three days later.

I seldom met Micky in the last few years of his life but saw a great deal of him after his death. He was never far from my typewriter. He knew I was writing a book about S.O.E.'s codes, the agents who used them, and the 400 women who decoded their messages; he urged me to "tell it as it really was and to hell with the security problems". He died before I'd finished it and although I'm reasonably sure of his present address I shall take no steps to send him a copy. He has his own resources and I am certain that he will meet me one day on that moving staircase and give me his opinion of it. When that moment comes I hope he'll be wearing his bowler hat.

'Million Dollar Movie' is published on 28 September by Heinemann, £20



Peeping Tom (1960)

Size and power, form and freedom – Jeanette Winterson reflects on common themes in films by women animators

OUTRAGEOUS PROPORTIONS

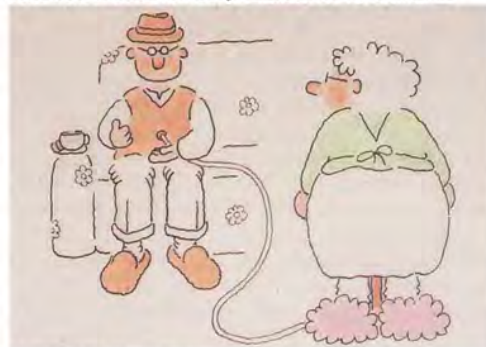
● For women with a talent for art and an interest in film, animation offers both a challenge and a safe place. In terms of technique the challenge can range from invigorating simple line drawings to scratching on the film itself or using tiny models to masquerade as huge buildings. There is no limit to the technology at the disposal of animators and they are free to use it or not as they please. Some of the best work is still done using nothing more sophisticated than cut-outs and a pen. Technology can assist the imagination but it cannot substitute for it.

In the film world there are few safe places. A handful of directors can make what they like how they like. None of those directors is a woman. (I expect Jane Campion and Beeban Kidron to outdate that fact by the end of the decade.) For the rest, the business is one of compromise, either of vision or of money, sometimes both. Animation is not the poor relation of features; it exists on its own terms and has its own agenda. Nevertheless, it can provide an artistic haven away from the demands of the cash register and outside the monolith of film production. Most animators work independently, many finance their own projects at the start of their careers. For women the combination of absolute control over their material and the financial capacity to make their project has resulted not in complacency but in experiment. There is a silly and damaging myth in the arts that the harder you have to work to get your project off the ground, the better that project will be. I prefer to see energy going into the work itself. For women animators this investment has paid off. Not only is the work itself of an ever-superior standard both in terms of craft and imagination, it is also attracting larger and more sophisticated audiences. We are beyond the stereotypes of cartoons and puppets now and into a truly alternative vision of reality.

The BFI's new collection of animation by women covers the best of the decade in Britain, with representation from America, Europe and Russia. *Wayward Girls & Wicked Women* offers three and a half hours of kaleidoscopic viewing on three cassettes. Swallowed whole or nibbled in sections, it will stimulate even the most adamant blockbuster junkie and certainly shock those Bugs-Bunny relics who think that animation must have a rabbit in it somewhere. There is a Russian poodle. A terrible Thurbesque dog whose creator, Nina Shorina, uses



Sentiment and abuse: 'Daddy's Little Bit of Dresden China'



Turning the tables: 'Second Class Mail'



Deception and cover-ups: 'The Stain'

puppets and two-dimensional drawings to delight in the anarchic overthrow of the tidy world by animal spirit. Animation often uses outlandish proportions to explain where the real power lies and to confront our notions of scale. It is like looking at paintings pre-Uccello, before the use of perspective. The really uncomfortable thing is not that our sense of measurement is upset but that we so easily respond to the oversized dog, the impossibly dwarfing towerblocks, the looming face of someone we fear. Animation taps our secret sense of scale, the crazed world of dreams but also the crazed world in which we live where perceptions of size are so often perceptions of power.

The Freudian ability of animators deftly to

display the motives behind the mask is one of the great strengths of the form. Animation can handle difficult delicate topics with extraordinary lightness and perception. Two of the best shorts, *The Stain* (Marjut Rimminen and Christine Roche, 1991) and *Daddy's Little Bit of Dresden China* (Karen Watson, 1988) are examinations of incest and sex abuse within the nuclear family. The horror of the experience, the fatuousness of the explanations and the disbelief and silence that typically surround the issue have been well documented and at length. But here, in the gothic nursery-rhyme atmosphere of *The Stain* where keeping the house clean means shoving the dirty dishes into drawers already bulging with dirty dishes, the suffocation is acute. Bright toytown colours emphasise the shiny deception and jolly cover-ups of what Daddy likes to call a game.

Using a resolutely different technique, *Daddy's Little Bit of Dresden China* employs models of disturbing centipede-like arrangement. Mummy's head, which looks like a colony of ants' eggs, has a red blindfold across its eyes. The girl has a china vase for a head. Daddy is made of metal and his face is a pair of razor blades. Intercutting the frantic menage of sentiment and abuse are jerky collage images of life down the pub where the local darts players cum sages offer up a running commentary on how incest never happens or if it does happen she must have wanted it. "What kind of a man would do that to his own daughter?" demand the cut-outs as they skillfully notch up their scores on a dart board with a bull's-eye of Page Three dollies.

Animation is a reductionist form. It is not concerned with character in the usual ways of film, theatre or the novel. It is not the business of the animator to make us know a person, love them, pity them, hate them because of who they are. Rather it is closer to dance in its human delineation. It offers emotion freed from individual association and yet it is not abstract. It can connect us directly to the feeling or to the situation without filtering that through a particular personality.

Murders Most Foul (Gillian Lacey, 1988) is a good example of this potential. Made as part of a series exploring women and the law, it examines the all-too-frequent situation of a man being given a very light sentence for the brutal murder of his wife. Lacey chooses to enact the trial as slapstick courtroom melodrama; the

hen-pecked husband, the shock-horror faces of the jury, the leering, weeping counsel for the defence, the voyeuristic judge and the row of unctuous clerks straight out of Gilbert and Sullivan. The effect of the comedy is Brechtian. We see past the individual situation into a widespread injustice which goes far beyond the example before us. Precisely because the form doesn't allow us to get too caught up with a particular character, it does allow us to see at once the nakedness of a situation and its larger implications. Erica Russell, a South African animator living in Britain whose piece *Feet of Song* (1988) opens Volume One, has said that "the most exciting thing about animation is its ability to free human movement from the physical body". I would like to go further and suggest that animation can also free human emotions from the constraints of character.

Freedom has a price. Form is by definition shape and choice. The form you choose has its own restrictions, its own rules, however innovatively someone uses it. Thus certain cinematic effects cannot be achieved on stage just as the tangible quality of theatre cannot be got at on celluloid. Animation sacrifices depth to impact. It does not deal in character in a fully human sense. It's not ourselves we see, the selves we can touch and feel. Animation takes our failings, foibles, prejudices, pleasures, all the stuff of humanity and injects it, not into a human being but into a line drawing (to put it crudely). I have talked about the spectacular success of this and it seems to me that there is no point judging animation by standards inimical to the form. It's not superficial playtime but neither will it ever be *Hamlet*. Indeed where the pieces in these volumes are at their weakest is where the animator tries for a depth and human complexity that is simply not possible. Knowing your strengths is in a large part recognising your limitations. That is, the limitations inherent in the way you have chosen to work. Push the form by all means but there should be no shame and no surprise in finding that a particular form can't carry everything in its bags.

Animation is exciting. It challenges the way we look at objects, including ourselves. It challenges the Goliath of the film industry. Best of all it is continually and exuberantly challenging itself. *Wayward Girls & Wicked Women*? You bet. Buy it.

Wayward Girls & Wicked Women is released in early November

From 'Snow White' women have been important to animation – but only recently have they come into their own as film-makers, says Irene Kotlarz

Imagery of desire

In the age of the classic cartoon, the 30s and 40s, production values (and costs) were high. The process of creating the illusion of movement from projecting thousands of separate still images was disguised, so that characters seemed to move smoothly as the camera zoomed and tracked apparently effortlessly through drawn forests, landscapes and animated interiors. Characters chased each other frenetically or bobbed along jauntily in a convention of exaggerated movement known as 'squash and stretch', which gave them a sense of weight, cuteness and believability. They were fixed in generic narrative traditions such as screwball comedy, fairy tales, violence and the chase.

One outcome was the appearance in these cartoons of what are by now familiar cultural stereotypes; otherness was represented in the form of physical and behavioural characteristics. The main movers in a story would usually be male, often animal, characters – from Mickey Mouse and Tom and Jerry to Roger Rabbit. Females, like Minnie Mouse, were often just a visual counterpart of the male with added eyelashes, bows and high heels. Teasing, flirtatious or winsome, they were also, occasionally, a cause of terror to the male, as in 'Porky's Romance' (Frank Tashlin, 1937), where Porky Pig has premarital nightmares about Petunia's insatiable appetite and uncontrollable fecundity. Human women, when they appeared, were usually a hybrid of signifiers of femininity comprising body parts like lips, hair, eyelashes, bosom and so on. From Betty Boop to Jessica Rabbit, the standard character was, and still is, that of a showgirl designed to be looked at. Animated with squash and stretch, the female body in action was offered as the object of pleasure or amusement; there's many a cartoon gag based on the bouncing-tit routine.

While I am not suggesting a male conspiracy, I am pointing out the

process of signification with which animators engage. In animation there is no pointing the camera at a chosen subject and allowing 'reality' to speak for itself; everything you see has been put there by the animator. For animators who wish to present an alternative to the mainstream tradition and its political resonances, the question of image and the body, aesthetics and movement, as well as the techniques used, are all crucial.

'Wayward Girls & Wicked Women' is a collection on home video of mostly British, mostly recent films celebrating the impact of women on animation in the last twenty years. None of the films included was commercially produced; some are student films, some made for Channel 4, the rest state- or grant-aided. While women have not been entirely absent from the world of animation – whether as characters, from *Snow White* to *Jessica Rabbit*, or as directors, from Joy Batchelor to Annabel Jankel and Diane Jackson, they have only come into their own since the growth of feminism and independent film in Europe and North America, and *perestroika* in the eastern bloc.

The title itself suggests that either the films shown or their makers are somehow going against the grain. The cartoon tradition, its techniques, generic conventions and stereotypes, are important to women animators as the mainstream against which they transgress; most use it, send it up or react against it in one way or another.

Joanna Quinn, in her now classic 'Girls' Night Out' (1987), turns the tables of the gaze on to a male stripper, complete with bouncing body parts. She lovingly sends up squash-and-stretch animation of the female body in her opening close-up shots of the huge, red, bouncing cherries being pressed on top of fairy cakes in the factory where the girls of the title work. Alison Snowden's 'Second Class Mail' (1984), about a little old lady who sends away for an inflatable man, complete with flat cap, pipe and rasping cough, questions the notion of desire being the preserve of the male through the simple expedient of reversing the stereotypical storyline.

The presentation of woman as desiring subject is the uniting concern of all the films, and animation allows the film-makers to express their concerns in ways which are unavailable to the live-

action director. Within the family, desire is shown as repressed or distorted, as in Caroline Leaf's 'Two Sisters' (1991), where the claustrophobic intensity of family relationships is probed using minimal animation to suggest the narrow, shuttered lives of the characters. Karen Watson's 'Daddy's Little Bit of Dresden China' confronts the family as the site of incestuous desire. Watson subverts the metaphor of the fairy-tale princess to explore her autobiographical theme and exploits the materials and techniques of animation to represent the relationship between persecutor and victim.

Two films by Emily Hubley, 'The Emergence of Eunice' (1981) and 'Delivery Man' (1982) – psychoanalytic, confessional and intimate in style – are reminiscent of aspects of the work of writers like Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton in their presentation of a young girl revealing her insecurities through diary and dreams. But while Plath and Sexton were both mature and reflective writers, Hubley uses a scrawled felt-tip technique to represent rather than reflect on her subject trapped in adolescence.

The final volume of 'Wayward Girls & Wicked Women' is devoted to three longer films, all of which reject the cartoon tradition in favour of a more reflexive, ephemeral imagery of desire. In Suzan Pitt's 'asparagus' (1978), where the constantly transforming imagery has the heightened colour and clarity of hallucination, creativity is explored as a metaphor for desire. Vera Neubauer's 'The Decision' (1981) slips in and out of animation and live action, the different strands of the film counterposing fantasy and desire, fairy tale and domestic reality, the flicker of the zoetrope reminding us of the process of animation itself. Desire is the ephemeral flicker, as Neubauer's little hand-drawn lovers boil and gyrate as they pass through the projector. In Joanna Woodward's 'The Brooch Pin & the Sinful Clasp' (1989) images of desire are glimpsed by a tiny male voyeur through the windows of a rickety highrise building. One woman captures the moon and then irons it, another waits weeping by the 'phone, and in the film's live-action epilogue, within which the opening animation shot is being projected on a screen, desire is animation itself.

Was Orson Welles part of mainstream Hollywood or a subversive independent? The question is crucial to our understanding of the new 'restoration' of 'Othello', argues Jonathan Rosenbaum

IMPROVING MR WELLES



KOBAL

Most of the American press has been all too happy to declare the new version of Orson Welles' *Othello* as "expertly restored", as Vincent Canby put it in the *New York Times*. But restored from what and to what? Even rudimentary information about the film's original form is not easy to come by in the US, where *Othello* brought in only \$40,000 on its belated first release in 1955 and has been screened only sporadically since. *Mutatis mutandis*, the acclaim that has greeted the restoration recalls the unqualified press endorsements of Francis Coppola's presentation of Abel Gance's 'complete' *Napoléon* at Radio City Music Hall in 1981, in a version that eliminated an entire subplot so that the print wouldn't run past midnight and jack up the theatre's operating costs.

To make matters more complicated, two different versions of the 'restored' *Othello* have been presented to the public so far, although only the second of these is currently in circulation. The first, worked on in Chicago by a team headed by Michael Dawson and Arnie Saks, premiered at New York's Lincoln Center late last year; I saw it several weeks afterwards at a private screening in Chicago. The second, which was worked on in New York, was commercially released by Castle Hill Films in April. The philosophy underlying these two 'restorations' is similar and the differences between the two prints are slight – the Dawson/Saks version favours a more prominent use of music and sound effects; the Castle Hill version makes the dialogue more audible, has omitted some material from the opening sequence and, in visual terms, has altered the contrast.

Unlike the 'complete' *Napoléon*, neither version can be accused of deleting major footage from *Othello*. The issues, rather, relate to the artistic changes – including both additions and subtractions – that transpired once it was decided to resynchronise the dialogue, refashion the music and sound effects in stereo, and reset the timing (i.e. visual contrasts) without adhering to Welles' own specifications (given in relation to a fine-grain print held by the Library of Congress). Without claiming any specialist knowledge of the technical processes involved, I don't think it would be an exaggeration to describe the new *Othello(s)* as post-modernist alterations of the original rather than as 'restorations', in any dictionary sense of that term. But considering the post-modernist reductions of the past that already proliferate, this may prove a moot point for the general public.

In any case, most people will have to choose between seeing a new version of Welles' masterpiece or none at all – and I don't mean to be churlish about the revival of a remarkable film that remains to my mind one of Welles' greatest works in any version, and is fundamental to a comprehensive understanding of his oeuvre. *Othello* set in motion the whole 'second manner' of Welles' film-making career – developed after he moved to Europe in the late 40s and became an independent – a manner that relied largely on haphazard and scattered location shooting followed by lengthy bouts of editing.

And it seems clear that every Welles film made after *Othello* – including *Touch of Evil* (1958), his last Hollywood picture – is substantially different because of it.

Always a scandal

A struggle has been waged since the initial release of *Citizen Kane* (1941) about whether to read Welles' films as mainstream Hollywood or as subversive independent productions. Admittedly, a certain ambiguity about Welles as an independent artist can be traced back to his theatre work in the 30s, when he was surreptitiously helping to finance some of his WPA stage productions, all officially government-supported, with his fees as a radio actor. It was surely Welles' mainstream reputation during this period that set the tone for his commercial self-image in movies afterwards, despite the fact that none of his features ever enjoyed a mainstream success. The fact that all his serious film-making wound up subverting the 'cinematic apparatus' in diverse ways wasn't always part of his intentions, but it has dictated the contradictory reception of his work in the mainstream ever since.

Over three years passed between *Othello* sharing the Palme d'Or at Cannes with *Two Cents Worth of Hope* in 1952 and its inauspicious US release, when it was compared unfavourably by most reviewers to Laurence Olivier's Shakespeare films – a response already elicited by Welles' *Macbeth* (1948). The critical objections lodged against the two films were practically identical: that Welles had done violence to the Shakespeare text, indulged himself, and made many of the lines unclear.

The main reason why the dialogue was supposedly unclear in *Macbeth* was the Scots accents, and Welles was obliged to edit and redub a second version without them. In the process we lost the first ten-minute take (the original version is now available on video in the US, and the lines are perfectly clear to anyone who cares to listen). The lack of clarity in *Othello* was blamed partly on faulty lip synch, most of which has been eliminated thanks to the painstaking work done in Chicago. Frankly, I've always thought that both 'problems' were excuses for people intimidated by Shakespeare or by Welles' reluctance to approach the playwright on his knees.

But if we recall that the Latin root of 'amateur' is *amare*, 'to love', Welles' romantic, impractical and passionate commitment to his work – quite the opposite of Olivier's bloodless professionalism – was the real scandal. And in comparison with most goods pushed by the Hollywood propaganda machine – which currently enjoys almost unlimited free publicity in the US, in both the media and in many branches of academia (where 'classical Hollywood cinema' and 'the genius of the system' are fashionable buzz terms) – *Othello* remains a scandal today. Consider the response of drama critic Eric Bentley back in 1955: "[A] film bad from every point of view and for every public. Technically, it is gauche, the dialogue being all too obviously dubbed. It lacks popular appeal, as the story is neither simply nor skilfully told. To connoisseurs of Shakespeare, it can only be

torture... I don't know what *The Daily Worker* said, but it missed a trick if it didn't hold up Mr Welles as a prize example of individualistic, bourgeois culture in decay".

In retrospect, I think one can see what makes Welles' first unambiguously independent film an act of even greater courage and defiance than *Citizen Kane*. In *Kane*, he was bucking only Hollywood and Hearst; with *Othello* he was defying both Hollywood and academia – not to mention the whole institutional set-up for picture-making, as it was then dimly understood. Properly speaking, he had entered the treacherous domain of the avant-garde – probably against his own conscious wishes – and a substantial portion of the American intelligentsia never forgave him for it. From then on, with the exception of *Touch of Evil*, he would make features only with the support of foreign producers, and not very many of these; otherwise he had to finance them himself.

Outside Hollywood

The recent efforts to bring *Othello* closer to a contemporary mainstream release grow directly out of its initial rejection. Ironically, the creative disorder and ideological disturbances offered by both Welles' art and career, which continue to account for an enormous portion of his appeal, also throw up obstacles for anyone – including Welles himself when he was alive – hoping to cash in on this appeal. The same complex forces that kept Welles unemployed as a film-maker for most of his working life – and continue to keep films like *The Other Side of the Wind* and *Don Quixote* beyond our reach – also play a significant role in preventing his 'classics' from reaching us in their original form. Consider the new prints of *Citizen Kane* struck last year, supervised by none other than Robert Wise, whose mainstream 'improvements' on Welles stretch back to *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942). As one of Welles' most faithful early collaborators was quick to point out to me, the 'News on the March' sequence in the new version of *Kane* is printed to look less grainy, while the projection-room sequence has been made too bright, both changes that constitute a reduction in Welles' departures from Hollywood norms.

The mainstream versus independent argument affects both the quality and quantity of information we have about Welles' films. For instance, a central part of the agenda of Pauline Kael's highly influential *Raising Kane* (1971), designed largely as a riposte to Andrew Sarris' auteurism, was to redefine the film as a mainstream Hollywood effort (rather than an independent effort that used Hollywood studio facilities), establishing Hollywood screenwriter Herman J. Mankiewicz, rather than maverick independent Welles, as its key auteur. (If Hollywood could produce a *Kane*, ran Kael's implicit argument, then maybe the system wasn't so corrupt as Welles' experience implied.) Even Robert L. Carringer's *The Making of 'Citizen Kane'* (1985), which corrected some of Kael's slipshod scholarship, furthered the mainstream treatment of the film, with the result that a Hollywoodised Welles has become the unexamined staple of today's critical orthodoxy – despite ►



Between shadow and light: Othello murders Desdemona in a scene where betrayal, not passion, is the main motivation

◀ the fact that the six studio pictures he directed represent at best only about a third of his completed movies and a quarter of his total film output. Thanks to this bias, the remainder of Welles' oeuvre – including *Othello* – has often had to go begging.

Is it a new movie?

Clearly one of the things that drove Welles into independence was a desire to recut his own material, with the result that 'definitive' versions of many of his films are impossible to establish. In the case of *Othello* at least two distinct versions exist – three if we count the material used in the essay film *Filming 'Othello'* (1978), which resynchronises the music in the opening sequence and recuts everything else. My own recent research suggests that Welles preferred the version featuring his spoken credits after the opening funeral sequence, but with no narration. Unfortunately neither the Dawson/Saks nor the Castle Hill versions follows this format: indeed, Dawson and Saks were unaware of its existence until their work was virtually complete. (So was I, for that matter; in fact, I owe my discovery of this cut to Dawson.) The negative they found in a New Jersey warehouse and which formed the basis of their work contains Welles' off-screen narration after the opening funeral sequence, printed credits at the end of the film, and somewhat different editing throughout.

As a Chicago resident, I was able to follow portions of the Dawson/Saks restoration work at various stages, and I can vouch for the team's fanatical scrupulousness about using the most up-to-date technology, and for their relative indifference to matters of historical research. (Apart from the Library of Congress, for

instance, no film archives were consulted.) In some ways, their philosophy is allied with the myth that wants to remove Welles from the disreputable independent sector and plant him squarely inside the same mainstream that rejected him during his lifetime.

An example of this myth in action is the assumption, implicit in the refurbished *Othello*, that the only reason Welles didn't use stereo was that it was technically unavailable to him, and that the way he would have used it conforms precisely to today's commercial norms. My own research has revealed that Welles briefly explored the possibility of recording *Macbeth* in stereo, but has thrown up no clues as to how he might have used it. But considering his eclecticism and originality, as well as his prodigious radio experience, I seriously doubt that it would have been in the way it is used in the new *Othello*. The dynamic relationships between dialogue, music and sound effects in the original have all been substantially altered: to put it bluntly, the new version sounds like a different movie, and state-of-the-art equipment or not, a lesser one.

Stroking the strings

When it came to 'restoring' the music, no attempt was made to locate the manuscript of Francesco Lavagnino and Alberto Barberis' score. Michael Pendowski, a Chicago Symphony conductor, was hired to listen to the music, transcribe what he heard, and record it with new musicians. Similar work was done by other technicians in imitating the original sound effects – with the waves of Lake Michigan, for instance, standing in for those of the Mediterranean. Moreover, the technicians working on the music and sound effects did so in isolation,

with no apparent attempt to conceive of these as part of the same aesthetic whole.

A paragraph from Charles Higham's *Orson Welles: The Rise and Fall of an American Genius* (1985) is worth citing as one of the only pieces of information we have in English about the recording of Lavagnino's music, most or all of it apparently drawn from an interview with Lavagnino himself: "Welles demanded an orchestra of two hundred, which was conducted by Franco Ferrara... When the work was completed, Welles was still passionately involved with changes. He was unhappy with the funeral music, feeling that it sounded like 'Tchaikovsky touring in Italy'; consequently it was rescored for harpsichord, and Lavagnino worked with the only harpsichord available in Rome. Lavagnino recorded the dirge with sixteen instruments and eight voices by placing three microphones to create the right music perspective".

Ciro Giorgini, who has recently been interviewing the original *Othello* crew members for an Italian documentary, informed me that according to one of the production assistants, Welles personally stroked the strings inside a piano to achieve a sound effect for the funeral sequence, and ordered a spinetta, an ancient form of harmonium from Florence for certain effects elsewhere. In 1969, Welles recalled to Peter Bogdanovich that as many as forty mandolins were used at one time, presumably in the Turkish-bath sequence.

If, however, one believes in the supremacy of Hollywood production values over such details, there is no problem in accepting the fact that no spinetta or stroked strings or three strategically placed microphones or forty mandolins play any role in either of the new *Othello* soundtracks. Pendowski told me that he heard at most only three or four mandolins at any one time in the original, so that's all we hear in the new versions. Of course, spectators seeing *Othello* for the first time in the 'restored' version won't have the chance to choose between Welles' ear working with inferior technology, and Pendowski's working with superior equipment. Even with the best will and mimicry in the world (as well as the use of the original music as a 'guide track'), most of the precise elements of music and sound effects as supervised by Welles are no longer part of the film.

There's also the matter of the chanting of Latin by monks in the funeral procession of the opening sequence – a prolonged, hushed recitation that serves effectively both as diminuendo after the music ends and as a tapering sound bridge to the silence that follows in both Welles-edited versions. This chanting was still in the penultimate version of the Dawson/Saks restoration, but has disappeared from the Castle Hill version. Why this major part of Welles' sound design was deleted is anyone's guess, although I'm told that it will be restored in the video and laser-disc versions. If such a correction leads to some reflection about the dangers of unlimited trust in technology over research, we may have less to worry about when it comes to future restorations, including one currently contemplated for *Chimes at Midnight*.

'Othello' opens in London on 9 October

The strange and exhausting history of the production of 'Othello' is visible on screen, claims Philip Kemp

Perplexed in the extreme

Orson Welles' career always ran the danger of being overwhelmed by his legend, and the same applies to several of his films – *Othello* perhaps more than any other. Watching the movie, it's impossible not to be constantly reminded of its notoriously fraught production history, since that history is indelibly inscribed in the very texture of the film.

Othello was the first film – barring his abortive South American excursus, *It's All True* (1941) – that Welles directed without the supportive infrastructure of a Hollywood studio. With *Othello*, he launched himself on the peripatetic, European phase of his career, with films made piecemeal and on the run, funding and facilities scabbled together from random sources across several countries.

Where *Macbeth* had taken three weeks to make, *Othello* took three years. Filming was dispersed over five towns in Italy and three in Morocco; roles were cast and recast; crews hired and dismissed; and every few weeks the money ran out. When this happened, Welles would take off to act in someone else's movie, often returning with purloined costumes as well as the necessary funds. Meanwhile the cast, a "chic but highly neurotic lumber camp", as Michéal MacLiammóir (the film's Iago) described them, mooched around in hotels or villas, awaiting events with resigned incredulity.

Welles had originally conceived his film in a series of long, sinuous takes with the smallest possible number of camera set-ups. In the event, the dizzy logistics of the production put paid to any such plan, since the actors needed for any given scene were rarely together in the same place, or sometimes even on the same continent. Welles was obliged to resort to frenzied cross-cutting (Roderigo, kicking Cassio in Mazagan, receives a return clout in Orgete, a thousand miles across the Mediterranean) or blatant subterfuge. "Every time you see someone with his back turned or with a hood over his head", he later explained, "you can be sure it's a stand-in".

After the principal shooting was at last completed, there remained a year or more's tussle with editing and sound-mixing. Continuity had existed, if at all, only in Welles' own head, and when he came to put the jigsaw together, quite a few pieces proved to be missing. It took all his formidable charm to cajole his main actors – several of whom were still waiting

to be paid – back to Italy to shoot pick-ups. By way of further complication, certain players were redubbed *in toto*, usually by Welles himself – among them the Roderigo of Robert Coote, whose voice, Welles decided, "doesn't sound like it's coming from his body". As a result, Roderigo speaks in a parody of an effete British accent which rarely coincides with his lip movements – and doesn't sound like it's coming from any body at all.

This particular symptom of Welles' lack of confidence in his colleagues – or maybe in his own casting choices – was to grow steadily more acute: by the time he made *Mr. Arkadin* (1954) and *The Trial* (1962), he was regularly voicing a dozen or more supporting roles along with his own. *Othello* also marks the start of another ominous trend in Welles' working methods: his reluctance to let go of a film. Without a studio on his back demanding a prompt release date, he became increasingly prone to obsessive tinkering with his work, agonising over the re-editing process and releasing the finished film hopelessly late or sometimes (as with the allegedly completed thriller *The Deep*) not at all.

Othello's spaced-out (in every sense) production schedule took its toll on the acting. Of the main roles, only two manage to sustain the intensity needed for Shakespeare's concentrated psycho-drama: Fay Compton's Emilia, raging bitterly at male stupidity, and MacLiammóir's Iago. Stripping the role – at Welles' behest – of its Machiavellian humour, MacLiammóir gives us a cold, twisted resentment born of sexual envy, "the secret isolation of impotence under the soldier's muscles, the flabby solitude gnawing at the groin, the eye's untiring calculation". The words, MacLiammóir's own, reveal the depth of physical insight he brought to the part, and his insidious performance effectively steals the film.

Welles himself, as Othello, is noble and wounded, a goaded bull of a Moor, yet with something incongruously spoilt-babyish about the nose and mouth. Between him and the cool, bewildered Desdemona of Suzanne Cloutier is no sense of grand passion, or even of transient lust; we get the "not wisely" of their love, but little of the "too well". But reciprocal love, in any case, was never something Welles showed much interest in portraying. Betrayal, especially in the guise of the frame-up, is the key emotional configuration of his films.

And in *Othello* the betrayal is played out in the full public arena. Where his *Macbeth* had been dank, claustrophobic and studio-bound, Welles now – lacking money for sets and studio mock-ups – threw his film open to the elements, creating a drama whose characters are tossed as much by natural forces as by their turbulent passions. The jealousy scene is staged high on a battlement overhanging a raging sea, pennants snapping in the wind as Othello and Iago edge each

other ever more vertiginously close to the abyss.

The wide-open settings make this a painfully unprivate *Othello*, with the Moor's humiliation and agony exposed on all sides to inquisitive eyes. When he suffers his epileptic fit, the subjective camera whirls blindly skywards; on the soundtrack the cry of seabirds modulates into mocking female laughter; and Othello regains consciousness to see upside-down faces ranged along every turret, gazing avidly down on him.

Even in more intimate moments the personal drama is constantly overlooked, with eavesdropping figures sliding around corners or behind pillars, peering through grilles and along passageways. No room seems to be securely closed off; walls and even ceilings are pierced by spyholes. The brawl between Cassio and Roderigo is watched by a crowd staring down through a circular well – and a similar hole materialises over Desdemona's bedchamber to provide a god's-eye view of the Moor's death (and to hint once more at the imagery of the bullring). Welles locates his *Othello* in a paranoid world, as if in embittered recollection of his own fate: the gifted outsider publicly brought low by the scheming Iagos of Hollywood, "a fixed figure for the time of scorn/To point his slow unmoving finger at".

This sense of diminishment, of noble power degraded, is intensified by Welles' use of the overpowering scale of his locations. Time and again he pulls back from his characters, reducing them to tiny gesticulating figures tucked into the bottom edge of the frame, dwarfed by monstrous architecture – a technique that looks back to the Xanadu sequences of *Citizen Kane*, and forward to *The Trial*. Even the vicissitudes and flaws of the production are often turned to, advantage – and not only in the famous Turkish-bath improvisation of Roderigo's death scene, Welles' inspired answer to a dearth of costumes. An absent actor may be replaced by his shadow (most expressively in the case of Iago, whose lurking presence is the more malignant for being oblique), while the very lapses in continuity and the disorienting jump-cuts serve to enhance the prevailing mood of hallucination, suggesting the distanced clarity and lurching perspectives of an insomniac's vision.

For where *Othello* triumphs is where Welles' films, even at their shakiest, rarely fail: in the hurtling cinematic brio of its visual power, evident from the very first frame. In terms of breathtaking spectacle, no other of his films opens more strikingly than this. Welles often liked to begin his films at the end – he'd done it with *Citizen Kane*, and would again with *Mr. Arkadin*. The funeral-procession prologue of *Othello*, with black-cowled figures silhouetted against the horizon while a choir intones solemnly and the cringing figure

of Iago is dragged through the crowd to be hauled aloft in an iron cage, is one of the most stunning sequences he ever created. That its compositions are patently derived from Eisenstein scarcely matters. Welles borrowed constantly, and part of his genius lies in the way his magpie-gatherings are forged together into an unmistakable style of his own.

As the funeral scene ends, Welles' camera sinks slowly beneath the earth, as though joining Othello and Desdemona ("Put out the light, and then put out the light") in their shared tomb. From this portentous moment, we're swept into a flurry of activity, the camera wheeling deliriously around as Shakespeare's expository first act is despatched in a few whirlwind minutes: figures criss-crossing the screen in urgent diagonals, scenes impulsively cut short, lines and fragments of lines faded out under music or tossed to the breeze. This necessary business disposed of, Welles whisks us off to the pennants and battlements of his wind-whipped, sea-thundered Cyprus.

The compulsive energy of it all is irresistible, and *Othello* remains a wonderfully exhilarating experience – even more so in its newly refurbished state. Yet what the new print can't disguise – in fact what its clarity only serves to emphasise – is the calamitous change that, with this film, had overtaken Welles' work.

From the start of his Hollywood career, Welles had always consciously aimed at an opulence of cinematic texture. "I try to keep the screen as rich as possible, because I never forget that the film itself is a dead thing and, for me at least, the illusion of life fades very quickly when the texture is thin". And for all its vibrant, tempestuous imagery, there's no denying that the texture of *Othello* feels perilously thin compared to the depth and richness of *Citizen Kane* or *The Magnificent Ambersons*, or even of *The Lady from Shanghai* (1948).

The failure lay not in Welles' imagination nor in his visual sense, which both remained as fertile and idiosyncratic as ever, but in his technical resources, and maybe also in his will. Only once more – in the sole American-made film of his later years, *Touch of Evil* – would he recapture something of the opulence and technical assurance that characterises his early pictures.

With *Othello* a new pattern was set – the pattern of the decreasingly productive years of exile. The makeshift technical devices would be re-enacted in *Mr. Arkadin* and *Chimes at Midnight* (1966), the strung-out, fragmentary style of production would reach its logical conclusion in the perennially unfinished projects of *Don Quixote* and *The Other Side of the Wind*. In *Othello*, vital and flamboyant though it is, we can see foreshadowed (casting, like Iago, its thin chill shadow of downfall to come) the latterday disintegration and collapse of Orson Welles' directorial career.

On the thirtieth anniversary of 'Dr. No', Geoffrey Macnab reveals how a working-class Scottish actor became a suave English icon

BEFORE BOND

"I believe that Connery touches us because he personifies the best qualities that came out of the post-war upheavals in Britain. The reform of education, the busting of the BBC's monopoly and so on allowed a lot of talent to flourish... he also represents something timeless. His persona reaches back and touches a tradition in British life. I can best define that by suggesting characters he could play better than anyone else: Captain Cook, Thomas Hardy, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, Tom Finney, W. G. Grace, Keir Hardie, Drake". (From John Boorman's introduction to *Sean Connery: His Life and Films* by Michael Feeney Callan, London 1983)

● Mountain McClintock is as weary and hackneyed a fictional character as they come. He is a shambling, inarticulate boxer, the unbeaten hero of more than a hundred fights whose career is on the skids. He has damaged his eyesight, and the doctors have told him to hang up his gloves. Now, it seems, all his past glories are forgotten and he must stoop to earn a living. McClintock is lured by unscrupulous promoters, who want to trade on his name, into the humiliating world of show wrestling. Here, the champ suffers the ultimate indignity: he is dressed up as a clown and is made to gambol round the ring like a performing bear, as if mocking his own strength and majesty.

Rod Serling's *Requiem for a Heavyweight* was broadcast live on American television in the mid-50s, with Jack Palance in the leading role. For all its mawkishness, it was much acclaimed. Along with plays like Paddy Chayevsky's *Marty*, it was viewed as a new kind of drama which went against the grain of mainstream television and dared to show tragedy and failure, to be resolutely downbeat, even if that meant upsetting the advertisers.

A year or two later, the BBC made its own version of Serling's tale. Palance was asked to reprise his performance, but contractual obligations forced him to drop out at the last moment. In his place, ten days before the broadcast, the producers brought in a struggling young Scottish actor and former bodybuilder. With its sense of something Celtic, saturnine and monumental, there could hardly be a more appropriate name for a Sean Connery character than Mountain McClintock. Despite the frenzied atmosphere of live television drama and the necessity of learning a long

part in barely more than a week, Connery managed to keep calm, always one of his hallmarks, and his "oddly wistful" performance was well received. There were kind notices in *The Listener* and *The Times* and Connery was suddenly in demand. Very shortly afterwards, having turned down offers from the Rank Organization, he was signed up by Twentieth-Century Fox on a seven-year contract.

It would be fascinating to see Connery in his first important role. Unfortunately, though, the BBC version of *Requiem for a Heavyweight* wasn't considered worth preserving – and so one can only speculate as to what his performance was really like. But it's hard to imagine any other British actor who could have taken over from Palance with such ease.

It's not that the British can't play losers the way Americans can. On the contrary, the heroic pathos of noble failure is a touchstone of our culture. From Captain Scott freezing to death in the Antarctic to Lawrence of Arabia's motorcycling mishap, we have enshrined figures who somehow didn't quite make it. American versions of such tales are rawer, more bitter by far. The boxer as tragic hero is a case in point: Newman, Brando, Stallone, De Niro and Robert Ryan among others have been cast as variations of the down-at-heel pugilist who gets battered, bruised or mashed to pulp in pursuit of that damned elusive American dream. Our chaps, the galaxy of flannel-trousered, tweed-jacketed, pipe-smoking protagonists of 50s British cinema, could never have attempted such roles: they simply didn't have the bodies to make convincing boxers. Who could imagine Kenneth More or Dirk Bogarde or even big Jack Hawkins stripping off their suits and ties and brogues and climbing into the ring? That particular holy triumvirate was far too well bred for the dirt and squalor of a fifteen-round slugging match. (It's surely significant that we find it easiest to characterise these British stars in terms of their clothes and not their physique or screen presence.)

Gilt-edged fable

Connery was different. He was no chap. A working-class Scot, his progress from Edinburgh milkman to front-rank movie star is a standard journey in Hollywood folklore, but has few parallels in the annals of British cinema. His is a classic rags-to-riches tale, one which has long since achieved a mythic status, but is worth repeating for all that.

Thomas 'Big Tam' Connery was born in Foutainbridge, Edinburgh, in 1930. It's not quite clear when and why he changed his name to Sean. One account suggests he borrowed it from the movie, *Shane*. (There is a certain irony in the idea of the big Scotsman taking his name from Alan Ladd, the most diminutive of all the Hollywood stars.) Connery's father drove vans. His mother was a char lady. He spent his childhood in an overcrowded tenement flat: as a wee'un, the story goes, his cot was the bottom drawer of a cupboard. When he was eight years old, he was delivering milk in the mornings and helping out in a baker's shop in the evenings. He left school at thirteen and worked as a cement mixer, a bricklayer, a steel bender,

a lorry driver and a coffin polisher. He served two years as a sailor before being invalided out of the navy with duodenal ulcers. But then he discovered his body. He started to pump iron, became a lifeguard at Portobello swimming pool, and moonlighted as an artist's model at Edinburgh College of Art. His body was his commodity, his ticket to success.

This in itself marks an interesting tension. On the one hand, Connery's image is of a dour, reserved man with a Calvinist attitude towards work who achieved success through sheer toil. On the other, he is an exhibitionist who became famous by offering his body as a fetish object. He is at once an idol of consumption, a cut-out figure to be admired for his looks, and an idol of production, someone whose solid achievements are a spur to others, an example to be emulated. When he was lured back to play Bond in *Diamonds Are Forever* in 1971, he demanded (and got) what was reputedly the best deal given any star since Mary Pickford. He donated most of his fee to a Scottish Educational Trust, and insisted United Artists finance two further films of his choice. The first of these (the second is yet to be made) was Sidney Lumet's *The Offence* (1972), in which he played the far from sympathetic role of a policeman corrupted by many years of service who loses his rag when confronted with a supposed child molester. It was one of his best performances, but seemed an unlikely choice of role for a star so concerned about his appearance that a few years later he would sue a magazine which had the temerity to suggest he was overweight. (Connery won his case: he was able to prove that his waistline was the same when he made *Never Say Never Again* in 1983 as it was in 1962.)

An archetypal Scot, who made his fortune playing an archetypal Englishman, Connery's press releases and biographies, with their emphasis on his deprived upbringing and big heart, often read like a second-rate piece of fiction concocted by the McIlvanney brothers, William and Hugh, who have been writing novels and filing sports reports about Scottish working-class heroes, bare-knuckled boxers and premier-league football gods, for donkey's years. The impression that Connery's life story was written by these Celtic bards is reinforced by the throwaway line that Matt Busby once offered him a contract, worth £25 a week, to play for Manchester United.

Star stories are meant to be gilt-edged fables. As the sociologist Leo Lowenthal observed, "the mythology of success contains two elements, hardship and breaks". Connery's exemplary rise abounds in both. An official version, though, was moulded in the early 60s to fit the whims of Messrs Albert Broccoli and Harry Saltzman. Thirty years ago, this duo launched the search for James Bond with all the predatory showmanship of a David Selznick on the prowl for his Scarlett O'Hara. Trevor Howard, Cary Grant, Richard Burton, Patrick McGoohan, Roger Moore (two years older than Connery) and even David Niven were touted as possible 007s. In the end, Connery was chosen, ostensibly because he was 'unknown', and his star persona would not dent or erode Bond's appeal. (As Tony Bennett and Janet Woollacott observed in *Bond*

and *Beyond*, there was another dimension to the casting. Sean's guttural burr lent Fleming's hero an international appeal that a fey, effete public-school Bond might not have had: Bond, played by Connery, could be portrayed as "a 'man of the people,' stalking within the Establishment but distinguished from it iconographically in terms of physical appearance... and voice.") Publicity proclaimed, "Sean Connery is James Bond". He was the star as trademark: he was to connote Bond and nothing else.

The producers didn't mind the stories about his tough childhood or his bodybuilding, but they discreetly drew a veil over his previous acting career. In fact, by the time he was cast in *Dr. No*, Connery was already an established actor. His first appearance on stage was with Dame Anna Neagle, when he was an extra in a production of *Sixty Glorious Years* at the King's Theatre, Edinburgh. The fustian matriarch of British cinema, cast by her husband Herbert Wilcox as Edith Cavell or Queen Victoria in a string of tasteful, patriotic middlebrow pot-boilers, made a neat foil for Connery, who, as Bond, would represent an altogether different (but arguably complementary) kind of Englishness. Bond was the renegade kind of adventurer, the man who would be king, on whose shoulders Queen Vic's empire was built.

In the early 50s, arriving like many other penniless or fortune-seeking Scots in London, Connery won a bronze medal at a Mr Universe contest in the Scala Theatre. He was subsequently cast in a touring production of *South Pacific*, and was taken under the wing of a venerable old Thespian, Robert Henderson, who prescribed him a stiff diet of highbrow literature – Stanislavsky, the whole of Proust, Thomas Wolfe. Just as he had catered for his muscles with the dumb bells, now he assiduously cultivated his mind: this was self-improvement taken to extremes.

Although he didn't receive much formal training, Connery studied for three years with Yut Melmgeren, a Swedish dancer. Despite his difficulties in finding work – his pronounced Edinburgh accent grated on the nerves of numerous casting directors – he was more interested in movement and gesture than in elocution. He had the conviction that information on screen could be conveyed visually: it did not need to be spelled out. This, perhaps, goes some way to explaining why American audiences, notoriously suspicious of the British accent in all its manifestations, were prepared to accept him. He knew how to move gracefully. Moreover, he didn't share the contempt for cinema evinced by so many of his contemporaries, who seemed to regard the medium as a useful money-spinner but a very second-rate thing by comparison with the stage.

Connery made his film debut in 1956 in *No Road Back*. The following year, he had a bit part in Cy Endfield's *Hell Drivers*. Opposite Patrick McGeehan and Stanley Baker, actors in a similar mould, he played one of a gang of reckless lorry drivers who haul ballast at breakneck speed down England's leafy byways. This was predictable casting: Connery as a working-class villain. Lead roles tended to be kept for better-mannered chaps. Although his was a relatively

minor part, he was given the opportunity to strut around in his leather jacket to good effect, and to get involved in a bit of brawling and drinking. In hindsight, *Hell Drivers*, which was a clunking failure at the box office, seems a brave attempt to break British cinema out of its quaint, gentrified manacles, to try to tap some of the energy of Hollywood films like *The Wild Ones*, or *The Wages of Fear* from the continent.

Classy classlessness

Connery's first 'breakthrough', with *Requiem for a Heavyweight*, didn't give his career the boost that might have been expected. Fox had little idea how to use him and left him languishing under contract, occasionally hiring him out to other studios. Thus he appeared opposite Lana Turner in *Another Time, Another Place* (1958) and was the romantic interest in the whimsical Disney fable of 1959, *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*. Playing opposite children is one thing, playing opposite garden gnomes quite another. Anyway, he seemed too dark and brooding a presence for a Disney family film. (Apparently, this was where he was first spotted by Mrs Broccoli, who noted with alarm the violent way he kissed the heroine.) Along with Anthony Quayle, he was a baddy gunning for Bond's iconic predecessor Tarzan (Gordon Scott) in *Tarzan's Greatest Adventure* (1959), but his Hollywood career seemed to stutter from false start to false start.

It was on television that he had his biggest success. His outside personality could barely be contained by the medium: it was inevitable he would make an impression. And he was lucky with his roles. He was cast against type as Alexander the Great in Terence Rattigan's *Adventure Story*. Then, in 1961, he landed the plum part of Vronsky in Rudolph Cartier's BBC adaptation of *Anna Karenina*. Here, he boasts an impressive aristocratic swagger as well as an early version of the Connery moustache, and counters Claire Bloom's cerebral performance in the central role with a certain earthy flamboyance. His most notable traits are his supreme self-confidence and relaxation. He is also threatening, bringing an undercurrent of malevolence and sadism to his role as Karen-



Not shaken or stirred: with Janet Munroe in 'Darby O'Gill'

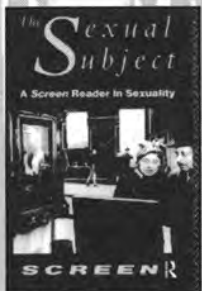
ina's lover which would be further explored not just in the Bond series, but most notably in Hitchcock's *Marnie* (1964).

At around this time Connery also played Hotspur to Robert Hardy's Prince Hal in a stuffy BBC adaptation of Shakespeare's history plays, *The Age of Kings*. Again, he is physically relaxed, not at all fazed by the verse speaking, and is considerably more dynamic than the leaden Shakespearian actors surrounding him. In 1961, he had his first starring role in films, opposite Alfred Lynch in Cyril Frankel's *On the Fiddle*, a batty English comedy of the kind that would make Truffaut throw up his hands in horror. Set in the war years, it features a redoubtable list of character actors in bit parts, everybody from John Le Mesurier to Wilfred Hyde White and even Barbara Windsor. It tells of a cockney spiv, played by Lynch, who is inveigled into enlisting to avoid a court fine. The cockney takes the brawny but simple-minded gypsy, Pedlar Pascoe (Connery), under his wing, and together the two try everything in their power to 'fiddle' the army. The relationship between gentle giant Connery and sharp-as-needles Lynch recalls that between Lon Chaney and Burgess Meredith in *Of Mice and Men*. Connery is encouraged to be gormless, and displays a nice line in vacant smiles and self-deprecating humour. This is as far away from Bond as you could get.

Of course, with Connery, Bond is like a boomerang. You can't write about him without confronting that particular phenomenon. What Connery brought to Bond was a sense of classy classlessness. This, no doubt, is why Kingsley Amis so disapproved of the casting: "his face and voice are wrong for the Bond of the books who is a quieter, older, more polished and urbane sort of person altogether". However closely he became identified with Fleming's character in the public mind, Connery resolutely refused to behave like Bond. Shortly after *Dr. No*, he directed a hard-hitting political documentary, *The Bowler and the Bonnet*, about shipbuilding on the Clyde. Connery himself narrates, and spends much of the time riding around Harland and Wolff's disused shipyard on a bicycle, wearing a cloth cap and looking for all the world like Jimmy Reid as he berates the ship owners.

His easy switch from international spy to ardent trade unionist hints at what makes Connery the star he is – his 'authenticity'. In a way, the fact that he lives as a tax exile in Spain and is a partner of a London merchant bank as well as a Scottish Nationalist and trade unionist reinforces this authenticity. (To be truly 'authentic', you need to be truly contradictory. Otherwise, you risk seeming like a copywriter's creation.) As John Boorman notes, there is a whole range of characters he could play infinitely better than anybody else. However, for all his work with directors from Sidney Lumet to Hitchcock, from Brian De Palma to John Huston, that early slogan, "Sean Connery is James Bond", continues to cling to him. An essay like this merely tries to chip away a few fragments from that startling national monument Bond has become, and to hint at the Mountain McClintock beneath.

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A horrified lidless stare

Jenny Diski

For as long as I can remember, I've had trouble with monsters. When I was very small, adults tried to alleviate the terror by opening the cupboard and shining torches under the bed to prove to me nothing was there. It made things worse, of course, because the monsters' invisibility gave them absolute power. If they couldn't be seen, they were all the more invincible, and capable of taking on distorted shapes beyond even the wild imagination of a child. Worse than all my fear of seeing them, was my fear of never seeing them, of never being able to look at them hard enough to make them go away.

Plato was only half right. The shadow we see on the wall of the cave is not just a pale reflection of the Light, but an equally pale reflection of the Dark. The perfect form is less than half the story without its misshapen shadow.

Civilisation may be the art of looking away, but there have always been some who choose to look directly at the darkness. The cinema, more than anywhere, is where we find ourselves face forward in the dark, having to stare back into the eyes of the murderer, the vampire, the nightmare mutation, because the lens of the camera refuses to blink and look away on our behalf.

So on a gloomy bank holiday weekend, I pulled down the blinds, and indulged my taste for excess in a private video festival on the theme of the halt and the lame, the misbegotten, and the damned. A student of the psyche might find it instructive to spend a little time working in a video shop, where people like me scuttle back and forth, revealing, as in a Rorschach test, the twisting and turning of their minds.

The unswerving gaze (so different from the polite looking away, which is, in reality, more a stare than any staring we might do) goes back to cinema's earliest days. Lon Chaney's Quasimodo in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is a horribly misshapen, wrongly made gargoyles. He is a black hole of biological accident to match the equally arbitrary accident of beauty, which his single seeing eye looks on with longing, knowing it to be impossibly out of reach. It is his looking that moves us and frightens us because the camera holds steady on his gaze, and, for all his twisted frame, won't let us imagine he is so different from us that he is without desire.

We cannot look directly into the eyes of another and feel entirely unrelated. That is the trump card of the cinema. The child murderer in *M* is another kind of monster, as mysterious as the modern child batterer of whom we shake our heads, perplexed, and ask each other, 'How could they do such a thing?' The answer is in Peter Lorre's horrified, lidless stare, directly into the camera, as he articulates a familiar truth: "I'm always afraid... Always I am followed, soundlessly. Yet I hear it. It's me pursuing myself. I can't escape". For a black, bleak moment, watching his face, you look into the void and know there is a place close by where such things can indeed be done.

The truth is that monsters are always

with us, very near. They live in the dark, hating the daylight, like the vampire who has no reflection. But nowhere in the world is darker than the recesses of the human imagination. We might talk in broad daylight, on the sunny side of the street, but still the monsters have the perfect hiding place, protected in the shadowy nooks and crannies of our minds, and, perhaps, deeper and darker still, in our very cells. No getting away from them. Father Sandor, vampire hunter, explains, in *Dracula: Prince of Darkness*, that a vampire can't cross a threshold unless he's invited by someone already inside.

The makers of the movies have always known that they display the monsters for the twin human need of voyeurism and understanding. Tod Browning's *Freaks* would not be made today. Watch it at your peril; your modern, liberal sensibilities shaken, your wide-eyed curiosity and fascination barely beneath the surface. There are no special effects, no technology to keep you at a distance. The Siamese twins are Siamese twins, the Pinheads are called "Pinheads" in the cast list, the man without pelvis or legs is more fortunate than the man with nothing but a head and a torso. He displays his skills at lighting cigarettes; the Pinheads chatter and chortle incomprehensibly; the Siamese twins joke elaborately about the sexual quandary of one being married, while the other doesn't like her

'Monsters are always with us, very near.

They live in the dark, hating the daylight, like the vampire who has no reflection. But nowhere in the world is darker than the recesses of the human imagination'

brother-in-law and keeps dragging her sister off on the grounds that she needs a pee. "Aw", says the hubby, who can't get his hands on his missus, "You always make the same excuse". Sometimes they all just stand still and look at you from the other side of the lens. The challenge is not to look away, but to watch another kind of normality. But more than that, it's to confront our own, non-liberal disgust at the abnormal.

At the wedding between the dwarf, Hans, who forgets his place in the world, and Cleopatra, the perfect woman he fatally falls in love with, the community of freaks feasts and welcomes her, chanting, "One of us, one of us". Certainly, Browning's tale of exploitation shows us the hideously deformed soul of the physically perfect specimen, but the truly honest moment is the sight of the horrified stare of Cleopatra, faced with the possibility of being part of the deformed community. She is not just a wicked person, she is one of us. You realise gradually as you meet her stare that your own eyes have taken on the same appalled expression. Her fear is yours, and the monsters in our dark places are getting restless.

The more recent movies let us off more lightly, at least in the sense that they offer us monsters so stunning to look at that we can distract ourselves with wonder at their making. We may recognise the abject weariness and despair of Klaus Kinski's *Nosferatu* as something to do with us, damned and doomed to walk in the darkness, but we can't help noticing how beautifully blood-drained the lighting is. And while John Carpenter, in his bio-fantasy, *The Thing*, threatens us with the possibility of being mere imitations of the humans we think we are, the monster is so brilliant, you keep having to freeze frame to see its gory and glorious fleshiness better.

This century has brought us a new area of darkness and we are, with reason, haunted by our biology. It isn't just that we have discovered we are not God's best and favourite creatures. It isn't evolution that threatens us with the void, but the discovery of DNA, and the possibility that we may be no more (and no less) than vehicles for that microscopic, seemingly inhuman stuff which was floating around in the primal soup. The horror has come down to our very cells, although we've always suspected that the flesh is the source of trouble.

David Cronenberg knows it is. The fly in the human ointment is not really the fly in the telepod, but the terrible possibility that we are, finally, no more than the sum of our biological parts. Shake and stir the components a little, and we become any kind of horror. Once that becomes true, we will have dispensed with conundrums of beauty and ugliness, perfection and deformity, and all the rest of the dreams and nightmares of being human. God and the Devil will have no use, in their eternal battle, for beings which are no more than the result of the meaningless, random firing of electrical connections. Then the dark will close, finally, over our heads.

'The Hunchback of Notre Dame' has recently been released on video by Aikman Archive, £14.99



An honoured guest: Christopher Lee in *'Dracula: Prince of Darkness'*

Songs of innocence

I have always known, deep in my bones, that Tom Mix saved my life. I owe a singular confirmation of my nine-year-old instinct to Mrs Helen Mullens of West Point, Mississippi. If it's possible to have a fairy mother-in-law on the lines of a fairy godmother, then she is it. This is not the first time she has helped me fulfil a dream or solve a mystery. She is also a Tom Mix fan.

After considerable searching and with the help of an old friend in Memphis, Tennessee, she brought to England last May a rare videotape of *My Pal, The King* (1930). For me, four empty decades were finally to be given meaning.

My Pal, The King isn't in Halliwell. You'd probably need some sort of specialist reference book to find it. The director rarely turns up in an index. Nonetheless I believe it has a small place in movie history. It marks the end of one substantial career and the beginning of another. With *Destry Rides Again* (1932) it was one of the two talking features made by Tom Mix.

The film has the slight sense of incoherence peculiar to many pictures of the era, whose silent heroes had become a bit too old, slow and slurred for the transition. Hoot Gibson, Ken Maynard and Tim McCoy were all stronger when they were totally silent. Some, like Art Acord and Fred Thomson, simply shrugged and hung up their saddles. Their films, which thrilled millions, are almost entirely lost. The heroes who had once done so many of their own stunts were now mere illusionists. Solutions to problems were provided by stand-ins, cut-aways, stuntmen and wonderful action footage, redubbed with pistol shots and so on, from their golden years.

Virtually every one of the cowboy stars had come up through the rodeos and begun as stuntmen themselves. They had learned their trade. They could do all the standard riding, roping and shooting stunts which had been regular features of rodeos and Western shows for fifty years, from Guadalajara to Calgary. According to Bret Harte, the French even had a name for these specialists. They called them *buflobils*. They had earned their wounds honourably. Like Mix, they had broken almost every bone at least once. Most of them signed lousy contracts and drank up their pay, just like the saddle bosses who had taught them their skills. They were usually hard up and the only way they knew to earn a living was to sit on a bronc and twirl a rope with one hand, a pearl-handled Colt with the other. The harder it got, the more they had to drink. Histories of so many legendary cowboy stars ironically reflect the real, frequently tragic, stories of the Westerners they had helped mythologise.

They came to regard with amused bewilderment the rise of the sissified songsters in their dandified duds whose only skill was the ability to sit a saddle on a wooden pony while moving their lips roughly in synch with the soundtrack. Like William S. Hart before them, they mourned the death of the old values. A few, such as Buck Jones (whose posthumous scripts I once wrote) died heroic deaths and cashed in their

**Buck Jones,
William S. Hart
and above all
Tom Mix and his
touching talkie,
'My Pal, The King'
are remembered
by novelist Michael
Moorcock as he
conjures up
Saturday matinees
in South London**

chips like true cowboys. Jones died when he repeatedly went back into the Coconut Grove to save people trapped in that famous Boston fire of 1942. Mix himself died in a car crash in 1940. Both Jones and John Wayne owed their early breaks to Mix. They also shared his values.

The silent stars left little behind them. Most of their films are brown dust and the few which remain are a record of daring action heroes performing in plots as rigid as the scenarios of the Wild West Shows they derived from. There is hardly any record remaining of their shows. Some of their talkies, usually in dilapidated prints, survived, thanks mainly to the Saturday matinee audiences and their television equivalents. Almost always these are their worst work: broken old men talking woodenly against painted backdrops.

With *My Pal, The King*, Tom Mix left us something a little bit extra, including a detailed record of his Wild West Show and his straight-from-the-shoulder political testament. While the romance and the action were the original attraction, I now realise that Tom's message has stayed with me.

I couldn't tell you if I saw it first at the ABC Norbury, the Granada Thornton Heath, the Streatham Astoria or one of half a dozen other South London picture palaces. In those days rivalries existed between the various Saturday Morning Picture clubs, just as they did between supporters of Captain Marvel and Superman. But I knew no such loyalties. I could sing the ABC Minor song as lustily as the Thornton Heath *Grenadiers*. On Saturday mornings I was prepared to travel from show to show to avoid the Three Stooges or a Dagwood comedy and find The Rocket Man or The Bowery Boys.

I think a fight broke out during *My Pal's* first bit of brief political exposition. I was

close to the front and remember certain scenes where the noise level, coupled with the distortion from the speakers, made the plot more or less incomprehensible, and the slender rationalisations holding it together were lost to the distractions of licorice-all-sort fights and intense trading among the white mouse and cigarette card fancy.

In those days I knew Mickey Rooney far better than Tom Mix. *National Velvet* (1945) had been out for four years and on the SMP circuit Andy Hardy was a familiar, if not always welcome, face, but it could well have been the first time I'd seen Tom Mix.

What attracted me then, as now, to *My Pal, The King* was the peculiar blend of fairly disparate genre elements and its crystallised pulp plot. I've always had a relish for stuff like *The Phantom Empire*, a Gene Autry science-fiction Western, and the sequence in *Eagle* comic's first 'Dan Dare' serial where United Nations mounted troops – Household Cavalry, RCMPs, Arab *spahis*, Indian lancers, Texas cowboys, Cosacks etc – are landed by glider from spaceships orbiting Venus. This is probably the only time the elements of *Prisoner of Zenda*-style fantasy, Western adventure, and direct, populist political message have ever been combined with valuable documentary footage from a more innocent past. The film is every bit as good as I remembered. I found myself as thoroughly hooked as I had been the first time.

Anyone with a relish for the odd byways of Hollywood should get a kick from *My Pal, The King*. It very directly offers us a reflection, in Mix's prolonged monologue, of the good-hearted American democratic idealism which at one time established a model for the rest of the world, but would go wrong with Vietnam. Mix speaks up for the rights of the individual, for the institutions and apparatus of democracy and how it makes plain sense to treat people like human beings, not brutes. It is well meaning and, if you like, naive. It is paternalistic (which is why it went sour), and it does rather echo George Bush's triumphalism around the Gulf War, but at root it contains a message which has to do with self-respect and human rights. I find little wrong with the sentiments. They were pretty much the same ones which powered the New Deal and produced the regenerated America it took Wayne's pard Ronald Reagan to dis-mantle in the name of liberty. One old-timer's cracker-barrel, I guess, is another's tub of poisoned jerky.

The film was produced by Carl Laemmle and directed by Kurt Neumann. When it was made, Mix had been persuaded by Universal to try a come-back. Mix, like several others, had returned to the road with his Wild West Show. Dozens of accidents had left him stiff and almost crippled and about all he could do by himself were a few basic roping and shooting tricks.

Somebody at Universal decided to take advantage of the situation and produced a story in which Tom, as a rodeo boss, goes with his show to Europe. Mickey Rooney, as Charles the boy king of a Balkan nation not a stone's throw from Ruritania, is bored by



Wild West hero: Tom Mix in his prime



A Ruritanian Western: the eloquent Tom Mix and diminutive Mickey Rooney in 'My Pal, The King' – where all's well that ends well

politics. Villainous aristocrats plan to use the boy for their own ends and introduce dictatorship to Malvonion. It's at this point that the cowboys and Indians come to town. Young King Charles sneaks off to see the parade, meets Mix and introduces the ruggedly arthritic buckaroo to the lovely Princess Elsa (Noel Francis). All this has happened in the first few minutes.

Suspicious of Tom's easy-going democratic small talk, the tyrannical Count de Mar (James Kirkwood) resists the boy's enthusiasm, but eventually, with his kindly mentor Professor Lorenz (Wallis Clark), Charles gets to go to the show. What follows is pretty much the whole of Mix's show, evidently filmed by a different hand, inserted piecemeal into the movie. Cows are wrestled, broncs are bucked, and Indians attack a racing stagecoach. At the end of it all Tom and King Charles sit together in the royal throne room and discuss the fundamental business of the pursuit of life, liberty and happiness for all, in exactly those words.

When Tom asks the king what he plans to do when he grows up, he says, miserably, that he guesses he'll collect his share of the taxes and have a good time. "Hey, buddy – somebody's bin givin' yuh the wrong advice", says Tom in deep concern. The king asks him what he'd do. Tom says he'd run a

fair sorta government. "I'd take th' people's taxes and build parks, schoolhouses, hospitals, roads, public playgrounds. Yes, sir, that's what I'd do. Treat ever'body right". King Charles is converted. "That's a wonderful idea, Tom. I'll do it". "Then yu'll be admired an' respected and they wouldn't be runnin' around huntin' yuh up with a bomb in their hands", Tom opines wisely. This kind of red republicanism incenses Count de Mar and when, fired by Tom's democratic ideals, King Charles refuses to sign certain documents, the Count resorts to more direct methods of control. Consequently, King Charles is abducted to a castle where the vicious Count offers Charles' mentor, Professor Lorenz, the opportunity to kill himself and the boy with a revolver or threatens to sentence them both to be killed by the leering gaoler, Eizel, in some hideously prolonged fashion.

Meanwhile, excusing himself from his ongoing romance with Princess Elsa, Tom gets on the boy's trail. His posse of buckaroos, gauchos, redskins and rodeo clowns rides to rescue the king. Ultimately they realise they must storm the castle.

Eat your heart out, Rassendyll. Malvonion's must be the only medieval castle in Europe to be attacked by whooping Sioux, hollering cowboys, trick-shooting vaqueros,

bolas-whirling cauchos and equestrian augustes. With their rodeo and circus skills to aid them, they succeed in entering the castle and help Tom save King Charles as he is moments from drowning.

An epilogue shows Tom bidding farewell to his sighing sweetheart and downcast Rooney. Reminding the boy of his democratic destiny and with an assurance from Charles that those values will now inform every aspect of Malvonian life, Tom takes a cowpoke's farewell. A tip of his finger to the brim of his hat and he is, almost for the last time, swallowed by the sunset.

It is a very satisfactory resolution. All evil is banished. Virtue triumphs. Heroism is recognised and courage rewarded; a secure future lies ahead and a clear message is delivered to tyrants everywhere. You can almost hear Will Rogers spitting reflectively over the hitching rail and drawling, "An' this means you, Sign-nor Mooso-leeni".

I grew up, with Jewish ancestors, in V-bombed London. It was young Americans inspired by those simple ideals who turned up to save me in the nick of time. If they hadn't, I'd probably be dead.

Maybe that idealism later turned sour because it wouldn't translate into simple solutions. But I'm in no doubt whatsoever about its importance to me.

'The film has the slight sense of incoherence peculiar to many pictures of the era, whose silent heroes had become a bit too old. Some, like Art Acord and Fred Thomson, simply shrugged and hung up their saddles'

A suitable case for treatment

Adam Barker

The Films of Nicolas Roeg: Myth and Mind
John Izod, Macmillan, £45.00, 294pp

When David Lynch was reluctantly persuaded by friends to visit a psychoanalyst, his first question was, "Will it affect my creativity?" When the analyst responded that it might, Lynch politely made his excuses and left.

In his new book, John Izod puts the work of another great director of the unconscious – Nicolas Roeg – on the analyst's couch, albeit taking a Jungian rather than a Freudian perspective. Boldly unfashionable in its application of a widely ignored school of cultural criticism to a director who seems to have lost the support of even his most die-hard fans, Izod's book sets out to show that Roeg's often difficult and fragmented style can be understood in terms of Jung's theory of archetypal images.

The book starts promisingly with an analysis of the motif of the maze. Whether it's the pictorial maze owned by both the male protagonists of *Bad Timing*, or the physical maze of Venice in which the agonised couple of *Don't Look Now* find themselves enmeshed, Izod makes a convincing case for seeing the driving force of Roeg's

films as the labour to unravel a puzzle. Following Jung's analysis of the mandala, Izod argues that this quest can be seen as representative of the individual's journey to self-realisation. Many of Roeg's protagonists – David Bowie's Thomas Newton, Donald Sutherland's John Baxter, and Art Garfunkel's Alex Lindon – seem to be engaged in precisely such a quest.

However, things get more complicated when it comes to discussing the films in detail. The close analysis of the way individual sequences are constructed is impressive. Long passages investigate the symbolic value in Roeg's work of, for example, trees (with roots dug deep into the unconscious), and gold (ambiguously signifying greed and regality). But at the same time Izod's attempt to establish a symbolic coherence which matches Jungian archetypes, threatens to overwhelm the unique qualities of the whole, what Paul Mayersberg once described as Roeg's "montage of the mind" – much as the fragile glory of an individual dream can be reduced to a set of banal stereotypes by a dream handbook.

Inevitably, the film which succumbs most readily to this approach is *Eureka*, with its portentous use of elemental imagery – gold, ice, fire, water. While Izod goes to town on this movie, one feels that he is perhaps falling into the same trap as Roeg himself – ignoring flaws of characterisation and storyline in favour of the lure of overblown symbolism. And it is in its steadfast refusal

to pass judgment on Roeg's films that Izod's book is most disappointing. Many Roeg fans feel that the director lost his way somewhere around *Eureka* or *Insignificance*, and that he never quite equalled the achievements of *Performance* or *Don't Look Now*. Perhaps this has something to do with the vicissitudes of Roeg's career, with many of his films (including the most recent, *Cold Heaven*) embroiled in production and distribution difficulties. Or perhaps the change in mood from the social uncertainties of the 70s to the brutal dogmas of the 80s has rendered Roeg's psychological subtleties less palatable to public taste.

Maintaining a role of analytic neutrality throughout, Izod simply evades the issue – judging the films in terms of how far the characters have progressed along the path to "individuation" rather than on whether or not they work as cinematic experiences. Whatever the shortcomings of the overall approach, Izod's personal enthusiasm shines through the jargon, and his fundamental observation that there is something profoundly unsettling about Roeg's work (especially the early films) is a welcome corrective to those who would write him off as a spectacular stylist.

In the end, despite Izod's best efforts, Roeg's dazzling streams of images and strangely captivating narratives remain resistant to the logical certainties of analytic prose. His films remain – as perhaps they should – a mystery.



The man who lost his demon... Mick Jagger in Nicolas Roeg's 'Performance'

BFI STILL, POSTERS AND DESIGNS

News from the frontline

Roberta J. Astroff

War and Television

Bruce Cumings, Verso, £19.95, 256pp

The Korean war is notably absent from popular culture, political discourse and the academic curriculum in the US. Since researchers of media, film and war have focused largely on Vietnam and more recently on the 1991 Gulf War, Cumings' comparative study of television representations of all three wars is cogent and instructive.

His title, though, is rather broader than his topic, since he limits his analysis to documentary and news retellings, avoiding discussion of, for instance, the television series *M*A*S*H* on the grounds that it is "really" about the Vietnam war, though he doesn't refer to it in his chapter on Vietnam either. Instead, Cumings follows his analysis of the PBS series *Vietnam: A Television History*, and of the news coverage on the Gulf War, with four chapters on the conceptualisation, making and editing of the Thames Television documentary series *Korea: The Unknown War*, for which he was historical consultant.

Cumings' anatomy of the making of *Korea: The Unknown War* recounts the frustrations suffered by those who attempt to make 'different' television in the face of political pressure and the need for sponsors. Cumings' stated goals, however, are also to criticise "the empiricist mind" which he argues television creates, to explore history, memory and objectivity, and to illuminate a war that has become not simply "forgotten, but a repressed, occluded experience". This last goal is amply fulfilled. But the debates over objectivity and the narrations of history are familiar to researchers in news and documentary, and it is here and in his attempts to articulate television theory that Cumings falters.

Cumings "dwells on the mysteries of television" and not those of war, declaring a greater confidence in discussing the abstract and general qualities of television. His confidence may have been misplaced. The first chapter, "What is Television?", presents the reader with a wholesale hotchpotch of media theory with no recognition of its debates and disagreements. He quotes works ranging across cultural theory, semiotics, ideological analysis, political economics, and the Frankfurt School, and defines television as simultaneously post-modern (that is, synchronic and simulacrum-producing), archetypal, as the stupefying plug-in-drug, as a McLuhanesque technology and as an ideological institution.

Cumings criticises Alan Bloom, whose ignorant condemnation of popular culture in *The Closing of the American Mind* triggered a noisy academic controversy about the idiocy of television and rock music versus the desirability of reading Aeschylus in the original Greek, but then himself reverts to labelling television as "an unrelieved wasteland". (Though he exempts PBS, the Discovery Channel and CNN from the full force of this particular criticism.) So Cumings quotes contemporary cultural theorists, and is particularly impressed with post-modern understandings of television, but ends up in the same place as traditional US



Jean Cocteau: great poet of pen, pencil and cinema, unselfconscious clown or adolescent dupe?

cultural elitists, arguing that only PBS's British imports and non-fiction television qualify as 'good' television.

The book is flawed in other ways, including occasional lapses in judgment. Cumings reproduces Kissinger's conversations in dialect (which he would not have done for a Korean interviewee) and regularly falls into personal descriptions of his female colleagues, students, embassy personnel and P'yongyang traffic police.

Cumings' analyses of documentaries and news stories, on the other hand, are absorbing, from his discussion of the camera-carrying bombs of the panoptic Gulf War as "simultaneously image, warfare, news, spectacle and advertisement for the Pentagon", to the Orientalism that permeates all three wars. He also argues convincingly that the highly orchestrated, Pentagon-produced Gulf War, not Vietnam, was the first television war. He locates the Korean conflict as the beginning of the national security state and limited-containment doctrine, as the re-ignition of McCarthyism, and shows how our amnesia about Korea is a wilful and highly significant not-knowing. In the end, despite his reliance on post-modern theory, his strongest chapters demonstrate how ideology and institutional pressures structure television documentaries and news coverage.

The life of the poet

Adrian Rifkin

Jean Cocteau: *The Art of Cinema*

Compiled and edited by André Bernard and Claude Gauteur, translated from the French by Robin Buss, Marion Boyars, £19.95, 224pp

This collection of short essays, letters, comments and notes, together with some

unpublished film synopses, represents almost forty years of cinematic history. The material is uneven – some of the notes on contemporaries such as Bardot or Bazin, for example, are hardly worth reprinting – but it is of considerable interest as a collection nonetheless.

The extent and direction of the reader's interest will depend on their view of Cocteau. If you regard him as a great poet of the pen, pencil and cinema, then *The Art of Cinema* is the authentic expression of a superabundant creative energy. In this case, even such phrases as "Fate made Brigitte Bardot the archetype of a younger generation..." assume significance. But if you see Cocteau as the unselfconscious clown at the court of high Parisian modernism – or, alternatively, as the dupe of that rather vulgar and adolescent version of the Baudelairean poet that haunts some French cultural circles – then these texts are interesting because they point to the wider context. The advantage of this reading is that Cocteau becomes a fascinating simulacrum of cultures which, in all probability, he didn't really understand.

Contemporaries such as Simone de Beauvoir seem to have found his conceit quite innocent. Perhaps the 'real' intellectuals needed him as the hollow echo of their own self-regard. Writing to Louis Aragon in 1959, he complained, "So who can restore things to their proper place in an age when a humble workman like myself is treated as a light-headed dabbler – a man who never accepts the slightest task unless he is sure of being able to complete it". Nevertheless, his views are symptomatic of a crisis in the complex relationship between craft and technology in the production of modern culture, a subject that has vexed far finer minds than Cocteau's.

This interesting theme nags throughout the book, densely embedded in verbiage. Cocteau likens his craft to that of a cabinet-maker, which puts him at one with the technicians on the set. A table is made, four-square and solid; it then needs a medium at a seance to make it yield up its meaning. The film is made from the poet's craft – his words – but the public makes it over into meaning, into the phantasm of their own desires.

Cocteau is aware that the cinema industry wants quick results, instant box-office bucks on the opening night, but he also insists that art is slow, and a film's meaning may well not be found until the conditions of its initial production have long since faded. Then Chaplin turns into Kafka; what was merely funny is revealed as nightmare. Cocteau's reflections map the cultural terrain of the Frankfurt School, who may have absorbed his confusions into their own analysis of material culture. And in his concern with the fluctuating positions of reality and myth in cinema, for all that he has little purchase on the definition of either term, Cocteau also belongs to the world of Roger Caillois and Georges-Henri Rivière, writers who were concerned with mythology and modern mass culture.

Yet despite the interest generated by his reflections, Cocteau remains the poet who speaks what he means, no more; who must be misunderstood because that is the poet's fate. Childlike, he wants it all ways – even to the point of elementary bad faith. For example, the unpublished scenario *Pas* ►

◀ *de chance*, the tragi-comedy of a sailor's life and loves, is clumsily heterosexualised for the cinematic public, putting it at a prudish distance from its starting-point in the more private *Livre blanc*. So much for authenticity.

The translation of *The Art of Jean Cocteau* by Robin Buss is generally scrupulous, though there are clearly a few errors in the gendering of possessives – for example, the singer Fréhel becomes a man. A difficult labour of research and presentation, *The Art of Cinema* is probably best thought of as the record of a once influential life which will probably never be more than a spectacularly avant-gardist form of kitsch.

The feminine and the phallus

Laura Mulvey

Male Subjectivity at the Margins

Kaja Silverman, Routledge,
£40.00 (hb), £12.99 (pb), 447pp

Male Subjectivity at the Margins emerges out of and moves beyond Kaja Silverman's previous work in feminist film theory. As one of the leading exponents of feminism's well-known 're-discovery' of psychoanalytic theory, her work stands as an example of the effects that theory has had on film criticism. On the one hand intensely and densely argued, it may seem daunting to anyone not already familiar with the field; on the other hand, Silverman's analyses demonstrate consistently that certain insights can only be provided by theoretical criticism.

The theoretical school of feminist criticism has argued that images of women sometimes act as signifiers of the sexual rather than as reflections of an historical and social feminine; these images should, therefore, be understood as symptoms to be decoded. Silverman and others have made use of psychoanalysis and semiotics as implements for the task of deciphering such images that disguise other meanings, most particularly censored and displaced discourses of sexuality.

Silverman has always been prepared to question orthodoxies, evolving nuances of Freudian and Lacanian theory through a study of the blind spots around questions of femininity. In *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*, her shift to an analysis of masculinity is comparable to a knight's move rather than a completely new departure; her theorisation of the feminine is now refracted through masculinities that deviate from the patriarchal, phallic, norm. In the context of male sado-masochism, gay subcultures, the repressed discourse of homosexuality, the male body as passive, and so on, a masculine identification with castration comes to be signified through the feminine. The masquerade of 'femininity' becomes a meaningful disguise within the masquerades of masculinity.

Although Silverman points out that female subjectivity remains a "central relative term" in her book, it is its relativity that is important. In the last resort, the eruption of the feminine within marginal masculinity signifies castration and exposes the fragility of the patriarchal phallus. Texts and images that work within this 'margin-



ality' not only offer a challenge to the patriarchal order, but are also bound to deviate from the conventions of narrative, spectatorship and so on. These themes are central to the two long and closely argued chapters on Fassbinder.

On another level, the book constitutes an important consolidation of themes which have been implicit in earlier feminist work but have hitherto stayed unformulated. As Silverman's arguments revolve around the question of "how subjectivity stands in relation to sexual, racial and class politics", the texts she studies are analysed symptomatically, as expressions of collective social phantasy. It is here that the book is a radical experiment, pushing feminist film theory towards a psychoanalysis of the social. Silverman uses the term "dominant fiction" to describe the delicate balance between an ideological belief system and the impression of reality needed to uphold its credibility, and then argues that the psyche and its phantasms provide the negotiating terrain between the two. She is clear: "I will be theorising a societal phenomenon through a conceptual model which is attuned to the specificity of the individual".

From this perspective, her chapter on 'Historical Trauma and Male Subjectivity' is particularly interesting. Here, Silverman analyses three exemplary Hollywood movies from the immediate post-Second World War period that bear witness to the way contradictions within the "dominant fiction" threaten to erupt at a moment when the masculinity of war has to be re-integrated into that of everyday society. While Silverman's discussion of war and the death drive is interesting and important, she perhaps underplays the sense in which dominant fictions have traditionally allowed a liminal space for masculinity to find the thrill of adventure and escape on its road to phallic authority within the narrative drive of war. Popular culture, in this case Hollywood cinema, provides the critic with access to the formative aspects of collective phantasy and its contradictions. But the cultural base of this "symptomology" is different from that of self-conscious cultures, like the cinema of Fassbinder, that already perceive themselves to be "on the margins", that are already steeped in "the world turned upside down".

Male Subjectivity at the Margins draws on literature as well as cinema. In addition to a chapter on James and Proust, Silverman analyses the "case history" of T. E. Lawrence. Here she places Lawrence in the political context of changing concepts of Empire

The cast of 'Desmond's', Trix Worrell's first stab at comedy writing that resulted in Channel 4's highly successful ethnic showpiece, up and running since 1989

around the time of the First World War, arguing that he found a *modus vivendae* between a masochistic sexuality and the desire to lead through his identification with the Hashemite sheikdoms and their struggle for autonomy. While this discussion is fascinating, the portrait of Lawrence seems, perhaps particularly to a British reader, more symptomatic of the English ruling class in general and an educational system that created leaders of the Empire out of condoned homosexuality and institutionalised sadism. Here again, one might have expected greater acknowledgment of the liminal nature of Lawrence's identifications and the fascination that tribalism and nomadic culture exerted over many of his contemporaries.

Silverman's close engagement with the films she analyses lights up a book which might otherwise seem excessively academic. At these moments, her involvement with her ideas and chosen cinematic objects is personal and passionate, and illuminated by an acute sense of the visual. But it is impossible to separate any specific insights from her general argument; the rigour of thought and theory in her book is an essential scaffolding for her discussion of particular movies.

Small-screen memories

Julian Henriques

Black and White in Colour:

Black People in British Television Since 1936

Jim Pines (ed), BFI Publishing.

£30.00 (cloth), £11.95 (paper), 224pp

Television, unlike cinema, is notoriously a medium without memory. *Black and White in Colour* is an oral history tracing the black presence in the electronic medium in the UK since the first television broadcasts from Alexandra Palace. The book is a major shot against the kind of amnesia that 'forgets' the fact that these original broadcasts included a popular black American comedy duo. Or, illustrating the point from the more recent past, Thomas Baptiste, who played in *Coronation Street* in the early 60s, recalls how a contemporary *Street* producer, apparently ignorant of the older storylines, told him that no black families would be cast in the programme "because it would mean they would have to introduce racial tensions". As Baptiste comments, "Years later there's no recall, no history or acknowledgment of my work".

The book opens with Elizabeth Welch remembering the hazards of negotiating the cable-covered studio floor during live drama in 1936 and ends with Lenny Henry calling for more opportunities for black writers, producers and directors. In between, in their own words, come Norman Beaton, Cy Grant, Kenny Lynch, Zia Mohyeddin, John Hopkins and others who have held the baton as, and in some cases for, black people on screen.

The interviews that make up the book are part of material gathered for two television programmes directed by Isaac Julien. While the television shows had the accompanying archive screenings to enrich them, Jim Pines' material has the breadth the written form allows. It extends across the

low points, as when actress Carmen Munroe talks frankly about the troughs in her and others' careers following Enoch Powell's racist speeches in the late 60s. And then there are high points, such as the brief moment in 1978/9 when *Empire Road* was being made by the BBC.

Unique among *Mixed Blessings*, *Love Thy Neighbour*, *The Fosters*, or *No Problem*, *Empire Road* was an all-black production, written by Michael Abbensetts with Norman Beaton, Joe Marcell and Corinne Skinner-Carter among the cast and Horace Ove as director for the second series. "If I'm honest", Abbensetts remarks, "it is a time that I still miss". But the series was not repeated or recommissioned after two short runs and it's still the exceptional black faces like Joan Hooley from *Emergency Ward 10* or Judith Jacob, who spent three years at *EastEnders*, who were more widely seen and remembered.

Given that British television is white-controlled and necessarily a highly capitalised medium, it is no surprise that what comes across from the interviews is how hard the struggle for visibility has been. Pearl and (the late) Edric Connor founded their agency in 1956 to represent "our people"; Thomas Baptiste formed an Equity sub-committee in the late 60s; in the early 80s it was Mike Phillips who initiated the Black Media Workers Association. The survivors of these struggles also pay tribute to the dramatist Alfred Fagan and the actor and writer Errol John, whose neglected talents contributed to their early deaths.

Black and White in Colour is a valuable marker to remind us where we have come from and the distance we have to go. What emerges is that much of the most challenging television – for example, John Hopkins' *Fable* and Santha Ramu Rau's adaptation of E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* – came in the mid-60s, when the medium was barely out of its infancy, suggesting that the situation has deteriorated rather than improved. In 1946, when the BBC resumed live television, Pauline Henriques (my aunt) had a part in the mixed cast of Eugene O'Neill's *All God's Children Got Wings*. "Since then", she says, "we haven't seen anything of the same stature... and black people still don't get in really meaty dramas".

Preserved for posterity

Geoffrey Macnab

Leading Ladies

Boze Hadleigh, Robson Books, £16.95, 200pp

"I was enchanted by the wonderful California fruit, although the lettuce was decidedly inferior, and when I ordered a salad, it came drenched in an abominable sauce called Thousand Islands. I still don't know which islands those are!" So speaks Joan Greenwood, one of the dozen leading ladies quizzed by Boze Hadleigh about their careers on stage and screen.

Hadleigh, it seems, was a rigorous interviewer: "I was bold, even daring, in my questions, and perhaps my gender and youth allowed me to probe where older and possibly jaded journalists wouldn't or couldn't". Not content with the commonplaces of the atypical anecdote, the intrepid author

elicited some shocking revelations from the "ageless, wondrous and fascinating women" he appears to have pursued across every continent. Greenwood, for instance, tops her demolition of Californian salad with an even more damning indictment of the American cuppa: "What made the tea even worse was the teabags. One couldn't help but taste the cloth".

Hadleigh's thesis is that there was a collection of British actresses born in the late Victorian era who, through sheer dint of talent, personality and perseverance, managed to carve themselves substantial careers despite lacking "the temporary advantage of classical good looks". As a breed, the author argues, this kind of actress is now extinct.

The Hadleigh recipe is an interview accompanied by a brief, largely uncritical, biography. Sometimes he inadvertently stumbles on provocative issues, notably the dames' contempt for the bastard medium of cinema in particular and for modernity in general. A self-confessed anglophile, he hints at the peculiar kind of 'Englishness' these actresses projected. In Hadleigh's account, they often seem the human equivalent of the English country house, stately and possibly rather dull, whose memory must be preserved as part of the National Heritage. They exist less as performers than as symbols of class, antiquity and good taste. Dame Flora Robson, in Hollywood from 1939 to 1942, expresses her exasperation at being treated as a rarefied ornament: "They wanted to keep me busy, the notion being that imported English actors lent tone to Hollywood productions". But Hadleigh treats her with kid gloves nonetheless.

The selection of the leading ladies is problematic. Actresses like Joan Greenwood and Celia Johnson, who enjoyed their greatest successes on the screen, sit uncomfortably next to crinolined dinosaurs like Sybil Thorndike and Edith Evans. Nor does Elsa Lanchester have much in common as a performer with Margaret Rutherford. It is not apparent what Rachel Roberts is doing in this particular gallery; not only is she a generation younger than the Hermiones and Beatrices, but her screen image and style of acting is far removed from theirs.

In the end, the main pleasure comes from the leading ladies' own words. The interviews give one the sense of a slightly dim nephew visiting his dotty aunts. Celia Johnson, asked about bad reviews, observes "it's most unsporting". Peggy Ashcroft, pestered by the author for five years before she agreed to an interview, talks about the thrill of working in films, but adds the inevitable rejoinder: "I did my best, as all stage professionals do, but I never considered what I was doing for the screen was of primary importance to myself or to anyone else". Hermione Gingold reminisces about why she was called "Hormone" Gingold in her youth, and recalls the day her first husband tried to kill her. And Estelle Winwood, still sweetly malevolent in her mid-nineties, takes a sly dig at Katharine Hepburn, her co-star in *Quality Street*: "At the studio, they called her Katharine of Arrogance. Not without reason, as I could tell you – but why bother?" Hadleigh's enthusiasm is infectious, if wearing. But by treating his subjects as precious relics of a lost age, he ends by doing them a considerable disservice.

Celia Johnson as 'leading lady' Miss Trant in J. Lee Thompson's 1956 remake of the J. B. Priestley novel 'The Good Companions'



shorts

Doing Rude Things:

The History of the British Sex Film 1957-1981

David McGillivray, Sun Tavern Fields, £9.95, 141pp

An "utterly worthless and insignificant" genre that will never be critically reappraised, claims McGillivray. Nevertheless his survey of these largely unknown films and their creators is entertainingly downbeat and affectionate. British attitudes to sex and censorship are explored along the way and it's no surprise to find Michael Winner turning up as the director of the 1960 nudie pic *Some Like It Cool*.

Children in the Movies

Neil Sinyard, Batsford, £17.99, 173pp

This book is a serious study of the "great universal theme" of childhood. As such, Sinyard's references are literary and historical as well as filmic, allowing him to traverse period, genre and nationality under eight thematic chapter headings, each dealing in depth with films that range from Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941) to Spielberg's *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* (1982).

Assault on Society: Satirical Literature to Film

Donald W. McCaffrey, Scarecrow Press, £26.25, 279pp

The sub-title says it all: a consideration of movie satires and the books from which they are derived, with lengthy comparisons of original texts and screen dialogue but no feeling at all for film *per se*. An initial chapter opines that film satire didn't really exist before the 60s, which means only well-known or popular films are discussed – *Catch 22*, *The Graduate*, *Dr. Strangelove* – which all come out sounding the same anyway.

Super Heroes: A Modern Mythology

Richard Reynolds, Batsford, £9.99, 128pp

Good, practical guide to the world of superhero comics, with reference to but no real consideration of their movie adaptations. But the chapters on 'Costumed Continuity' and 'Deciphering the Myths' are stimulating and entertaining, with evident relevance to the films, and who could resist the explication of Lois Lane's scorn for the apologetic 'morning after' Clark Kent?

Harpo Speaks!: The Autobiography

Harpo Marx with Rowland Barber, Virgin Publishing, £9.99, 482pp

Paperback edition of the 1961 reminiscences of the silent, harp-playing, blonde-chasing Marx. A recollection, indeed, of much chatter at "the two most famous Round Tables since the days of King Arthur" – the Algonquin in New York and the Hillcrest in Hollywood. It's page 283 before we get to Hollywood, and page 375 before *A Night at the Opera* (it was Irving Thalberg who thought the Marxes should have "believable plots, love stories, big casts, production numbers"), but films are just part of the flow here.

Fanny Brice: The Original Funny Girl

Herbert G. Goldman, Oxford University Press, £17.50, 308pp

A straightforward, readable account of the "Yiddish dialectician, laughing hit of the *Ziegfeld Follies*" who never quite catapulted to stardom the way Barbra Streisand did playing Fanny in *Funny Girl*. Fanny was famous, though, for her honest and direct wit: "Years ago we had a school. The school was vaudeville and burlesque... Today, they go into pictures from nowhere. If they had put me in front of a camera thirty-five years ago... I had such a kisser the camera would have stood up and walked away in disgust".

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Duane Byrge and Robert M. Miller

In the hungry 1930's and the early years of World War II, escapist comedies with titles like *EASY LIVING* and *YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU* were what the public queued up for. Among these were many enduring classics by directors like Frank Capra, George Cukor, Ernst Lubitsch, Hal Roach and Wesley Ruggles and starring Cary Grant, Carole Lombard, Fred McMurray, Katherine Hepburn, William Powell and Myrna Loy, to name just a few. This entertaining and informative study is divided into Major Performers, Major Writers, Major Directors and The Films, with credits, plot summaries and brief evaluations of nearly 60 productions. Bibliography and Index. 27 b/w illustrations. • 146pp. • Published 1991

PUBLISHED PRICE: £22.00 NOW ONLY £11.00

DARK CITY - The Film Noir

Spencer Selby

Fathered by German Expressionism and maturing in the post-war climate of disillusionment and hard-boiled realism, the Film Noir represents a creative high point in American cinema, much imitated but still not fully appreciated. This thoughtful study examines 25 classics of the genre, from Huston's *THE MALTESE FALCON* (1941) to Kubrick's *THE KILLING* (1956). Other directors represented include Max Ophuls, Otto Preminger, Billy Wilder and William Wyler. Each essay includes a full credit-list and b/w illustrations. They are followed by the most extensive filmography of this genre ever published, giving main credits, running-time and a brief plot summary of nearly 500 titles. Other features include a statistical analysis of studio output, a list of directors and their films, bibliography and index. 40 illustrations. • 255pp • Published 1984.

PUBLISHED PRICE: £22.50 NOW ONLY: £11.00

JAPANESE FILMS - A Filmography and Commentary 1921-1989

Beverly B. Buehrer

The West has only really been aware of Japanese Cinema since the 1950's, yet the first film was produced in Japan as early as 1899, and by the late 1920's the country was turning out 700 films a year. However, Japanese cinema is deeply rooted in its own history and culture, making it hard for outsiders to comprehend. This book describes, analyses and explains over 80 major Japanese films including such greats as *RASHOMON*, *THE SAMURAI*, *WOMAN IN THE DUNES* and Kurosawa's *RAN*. Plus: Chronology of Japanese History; Glossary of Japanese terms; bibliography and index. 328pp. • 70 illustrations. • Published 1990.

PUBLISHED PRICE: £27.00 NOW ONLY £13.50

HOLLYWOOD ART -Art Direction in the Days of The Great Studios

Beverley Heisner

Art direction is the "Cinderella" of film history, yet in the heyday of Hollywood it was the key element in the success of many lavish productions. This much needed study of the subject starts with a section on the development of art departments and direction, then devotes chapters to each major studio and its most memorable productions. Finally, there is a unique filmography of over 200 art directors, from Ken Adam to Alfredo Ybarra and Paul Youngblood. Bibliography and index. • 400pp. • 233 illustrations. Published 1990.

PUBLISHED PRICE: £27.00 NOW ONLY £13.50



Carole Lombard and Fred McMurray in *Hands Across the Table*, 1935.



Burt Lancaster in *The Killers*, 1946.



Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*, 1957.



Citizen Kane, 1941

CINEMA SEQUELS AND REMAKES 1903-1987



Robert Mitchum and Sarah Miles in *The Big Sleep*, 1978 remake.

Reed, Oliver (1938-) Tough, aggressive leading man also in Hollywood and international films. Sometimes seen in mean or vicious roles. Nephew of director Sir Carol Reed (1906-1976). Autobiography 1981: *Reed All About Me*.

Value For Money (1955), Hello London (1958), The Square Peg (1958), Carve Her Name With Pride (1958), The Captain's Table (1959), The Four Just Men (1959), The Golden Spur (1959), The League of Gentlemen (1959), The Angry Silence (1960), The Bulldog Breed (1960), His and Hers (1960), Sword of Shallowford (1960).



Publicity still for *House of Wax*, 1953.

Robert and Gwendolen Nowlan

You know, of course, that the 1981 production of *THE POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS TWICE* was a remake of MGM's 1946 film starring Lana Turner and John Garfield. But did you know that the James M. Cain story on which it was based was first filmed in France in 1939, as *LE DERNIER TOURNANT* (The Last Bend)? Over a thousand titles, and their various remakes, prequels and sequels are surveyed in this definitive reference book covering American, British and European Cinema. Each entry includes a plot summary, major credits and a brief critical evaluation of the different versions.

Fully indexed. • 954pp. • 128 illustrations.

PUBLISHED PRICE: £25.00 NOW ONLY £12.50

BRITISH FILM ACTORS' CREDITS 1895-1987

Scott Palmer

Here are filmographies of virtually every British actor or actress who has made at least three films, plus some major performers in only one or two films - in all nearly 5,000 names, of whom 700 appeared only in silent films (up to 1928). In addition to these entries, there is a list of cinema's Knights and Dames, a list of the British winners of Hollywood and British Academy Awards, and one of the actors and actresses with over 100 films to their credit (Christopher Lee, with 215, is only in third place). 918pp • Published 1988

PUBLISHED PRICE: £45.00 NOW ONLY £22.50

3-D MOVIES

A History and Filmography of Stereoscopic Cinema

R.M. Hayes

Stereoscopic cinema may not have given us much of artistic value, but as a technical achievement and social phenomenon it is well worth studying. *3-D MOVIES* traces the history of stereoscopy from early experiments by the Lumière brothers, through to the recent ill-fated offerings on American video and network TV. The technical wizardry and (usually misplaced) entrepreneurial optimism are well documented. So too are the films themselves - in a 250pp filmography and critical commentary covering 100's of American, British, European and Japanese productions. Plus a useful technical survey of current 3-D processes and services. 414pp. • 215 illustrations. • Published 1989

PUBLISHED PRICE: £32.00 NOW ONLY £16.00

SCIENCE FICTION, FANTASY AND HORROR REFERENCE

An Annotated Bibliography of Works about Literature and Film

Keith L. Justice

Sci-fi and horror movies are dismissed as laughable kitsch by most serious filmgoers, but they have a huge following, and for that reason if no other, these genres are hard to ignore. Consequently, a great deal has been written about the content and mutual influences of film and literary output in this field. Here are over 300 reviews (each around 200 words) of books under the headings:

•General History & Criticism •Author Criticism, Bibliographies •Biography, Letters and Interviews, •Encyclopedias, Dictionaries etc •TV Film and Radio •Comics Art and Illustration •Anthologies and Collections. Plus: selected reading list and three indexes. 226pp

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Tad Bentley Hammer

There are 42 film-producing nations in which prizes and awards are bestowed on filmmakers and performers - From Argentina and Australia to the USA and (until recently) Yugoslavia. This unique reference book describes the major awards in each country, and lists the winning film, director, actor, cameraman and other recipients in successive years. Some of the award series go back to the 1920's, but most have post-war

origins. For the Hollywood Academy Awards all the nominees, as well as the winner, are listed for each major category. 650 pages of award details plus bibliography, title index & biographical index. 900pp. • Published 1991.

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REVIEWS

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Amantes (Lovers)

Spain 1991

Director: Vicente Aranda

Certificate

18

Distributor

Mainline

Production Company

Pedro Costa

Productions

In association with

TVE

Producer

Pedro Costa

TVE Production Associate

José Luis Rubio

Production Co-ordinator

Carlos Ramon

Assistant Directors

Oriol Ferrer

Margarita Fernandez

Marta Calvo

Screenplay

Carlos Perez Merinero

Alvaro Del Amo

Vicente Aranda

Director of Photography

José Luis Alcaine

In colour

Editor

Teresa Font

Associate Editor

Alejandro G. Lázaro

Art Director

Josep Rosell

Special Effects

Reyes Abades

Music

José Nieto

Costume Design

Nereida Bonmati

Make-up

Gregorio Ros

Title Design

AN & C

Sound Editor

Miguel Angel Polo

Sound Recordist

Augustin Peinado

Dolby stereo

Cast

Victoria Abril

Luisa

Jorge Sanz

Paco

Maribel Verdu

Trini

Enrique Cerro

Commandant

Mabel Escañó

Commandant's Wife

José Cerro

Minuta

Gabriel Latorre

Gordo

Alicia Agut

Trini's Mother

Saturmino Garcia

Pueblerino

Richard Borrás

Man in Bar

Cosme Cortázar

Foreman

Lucas Martín

Javier

Jorge Juan Garcia

Ignacio

Carmen Ibarra

Mrs Estanco

Fernando Hernandez

Mr Estanco

Maria Valencia

Monja

Rafael Serna

Mr Escaleras

Leonor Herreros

Mrs Escaleras

Manuel Luque

Taxi Driver

Maria Martín

Niña Pueblo

Tomás Martínez

Fidel Rodríguez

Men on Train

Osmando Colorado

Priest

Amado Cruz

Waiter

9,339 feet

103 minutes

Subtitles

Spain, in the mid 1950s. Paco, a handsome young man from the provinces serving the last days of his military service, is engaged to be married to Trini, his commandant's maid. Shy, virginal, with all the makings of an ideal wife and mother, she has amassed considerable savings through years of hard work and frugal living, which will enable her and Paco to start their lives together comfortably. With a factory job lined up, Paco moves out of his barracks and looks for somewhere to live until the wedding. He is referred by Trini to Luisa, a beautiful widow who periodically takes in boarders, and agrees to rent her spare bedroom.

Instantly smitten by Paco, Luisa dazzles him with her sophistication and seduces him. Since his relationship with Trini has been completely chaste, Paco is overwhelmed by Luisa's spirit of experimentation in bed. Besides supplementing her income with boarders, Luisa engages in swindles with underworld contacts, and is not above cheating her partners by skimming money off her illicit earnings. Trini begins to feel a distance between herself and Paco, and while the couple are strolling in the street, she is surprised



The oldest choice – Maribel Verdu

to see the "old widow" and immediately guesses that she and Paco are having a relationship.

She seeks the advice of the commandant's wife, who tells her that she should use her own sexual powers to win Paco back. Waiting for Luisa to leave the apartment, Trini goes to Paco's room and gives herself to him, making sure that Luisa later sees her leaving. At first her tactics work – Paco reaffirms his love for her – but Trini is no match for Luisa as a lover, and he equivocates between the two women. Luisa is meanwhile being threatened by her criminal associates, and proposes that Paco should marry Trini, then steal her savings and run away with Luisa. Paco uneasily agrees.

Trini packs her belongings and boards a train for the village where the couple will supposedly live, but where Luisa has set up a scam to swindle her out of her money. When they arrive, Paco impulsively steals the money from Trini's handbag. He offers it to Luisa but pulls out of their plan to flee together. Luisa refuses – it is Paco she wants – and, driven by guilt, he returns to Trini to explain the situation. In despair, she asks Paco to kill her. He stabs her and rushes to the station to prevent Luisa from leaving. They embrace on the platform as the train pulls out.

It is, of course, the young Mediterranean man's most fervent fantasy: having to make a choice between the seasoned raunchiness of the older woman, who will teach him everything he needs to know, and the virginal bride who will cook, sew, bear his children and smile proudly by his side during their evening promenade in the village square. Such are the demands of the choice, in fact, that it is near-impossible for the protagonist to display any personality at all. As the intoxicated young hero of Vicente Aranda's steamy melodrama (based on a true story), Jorge Sanz displays an emotional range which trundles from passive to indecisive and back again as

the fiery rivals for his attentions gradually devour him.

In fact, one of the few interesting observations to be made in between all the groping and glaring is the disturbing disparity between the behaviour of the women – passionate, determined and devious – and that of their dull-witted menfolk. In one telling scene, the distraught Trini seeks advice from the commandant's wife on how to deal with Paco's infidelity when they are interrupted by the commandant himself. He reacts to the emotional storm in front of him by asking a series of banal questions as to the whereabouts of his raincoat. There is a men-as-emotional-cripples theme waiting to get out here, but it is sadly under-developed.

This is not to say that the women themselves are particularly well drawn. Much of their intensity and turmoil has to be taken for granted, from Luisa's kitsch experiments between her gaudy sheets (an early scene already promises to do for silk handkerchiefs what Marlon Brando and Maria Schneider once did for butter) to Trini's well-intentioned but ultimately pathetic displays of dog-like devotion. Luisa and Trini's motivation, centring on suppressed lust and social rigidities respectively, are scantily examined, as is the possibility that they are symbiotically related under a repressive régime such as Franco's Spain. In the end, libidinal logic and the conventions of *amour fou* dictate that easy money and hot sex win out over frugality and decency. But by the time we get to the overblown climax, it is difficult to care. In the eye of the storm is the remarkable Victoria Abril, whose rare ability to startle an audience with no more than a flash of the eyes is understood most astutely by Pedro Almodóvar. Here her originality is stretched to the limit, and she would be advised to guard her powers carefully. As the 'old widow' might put it, there are only so many silk handkerchiefs to be pulled out of one's sleeve.

Peter Aspden

As You Like It

United Kingdom 1992

Director: Christine Edzard

Certificate

U

Distributor

Squirrel Films

Production Company

Sands Films

Executive Producer

Richard Goodwin

Production Staff

Olivier Stockman

Jonny Kurzman

Celia Bannerman

Matthew Burge

Trevor Mathurin

Barbara Holmes

Lisa Barlow

Charlotte Darwin

Norman Swindell

John Thompson

Molly Hoven

Ben Jones

Jackie Fitzsimmons

Frances Lynch

Jeremy Poole

Screenplay

Based on the play by

William Shakespeare

Director of Photography

Robin Vidgeon

In colour

Photography

Anthony Breeze

Jack Collins

Helen Williams

Colin Vinton

Malcolm May

Danny Martin

Octavia Walters

David Smith

Editor

Christine Edzard

Art Direction

John McMillan

Catherine Goodley

Neale Brown

Bill Clayton

Hugh Doherty

Harry Ellam

Albert Grassi

Charles McMillan

Matthew Shrubbs

Paul Spinks

Helen Thomson

Terry Thomson

David Johnson

Music

Michel Sanvoisin

Amiens' Songs Set by

John Tams

Costumes

Barbara Sonnex

Marion Weise

Joyce Carter

Lilla Griffin

Iona Kendrick

Doris Philpott

Make-up

Pam Meager

Lindy Shaw

Sophie Tyler

Titles

John Fletcher

Sound Recordist

Anthony Sprung

Sound

Rosie Straker

Dick Philip

Paul Carr

Robert Farr

Jake Martin

Cast

Cyril Cusack

Adam

James Fox

Jaques

Don Henderson

Duke Frederick

Duke Senior

Miriam Margolyes

Audrey

Emma Croft

Rosalind

Griff Rhys Jones

Touchstone

Andrew Tiernan

Orlando/Oliver

Celia Bannerman

Celia

Tony Armatrading

Charles

Ewen Bremner

Silvius

Valerie Gogan

Phebe

Roger Hammond

Mr Lebeau

Murray Melvin

Sir Oliver Martext

Jonathan Cecil

Cate Fowler

Arthur Kelly

Michael Mears

Robin Meredith

Bernard Padden

John Tams

Lords

10,520 feet

117 minutes

Orlando for Celia's disappearance and orders Oliver to find them.

Rosalind discovers Orlando's love verses to her in graffiti on a wall. Disguised as Ganymede, she persuades Orlando to woo her as a substitute for Rosalind, offering to cure him by proving that women are impossible to love. Touchstone, lusting after Audrey, a sandwich vendor, is dissuaded from going through a bogus marriage ceremony by Jaques, the melancholic courtier. Phebe rejects the declarations of love of the shepherd Silvius, preferring Ganymede. When Rosalind (as Ganymede) is kept waiting by Orlando, she questions his and all men's love.

Oliver tells Rosalind and Celia that he and Orlando have been reconciled, after his brother saved him from a lionness and a snake. Celia and Oliver fall in love, and Rosalind (as Ganymede) promises to deliver the real Rosalind to Orlando (who is tired of 'thinking'). She and Celia drop their disguises for wedding dresses. Duke Frederick repents and retires to a monastery, where he is eventually joined by Jaques. To the strains of "Sweet lovers love the Spring", Rosalind and her father, the four couples and the Dukes' courtiers are reunited.

Christine Edzard's *As You Like It* convincingly places the play in a contemporary context by turning the Forest of Arden into an urban wasteland in Rotherhithe and the Court into a generic City institution. To begin with, the original ironies of the Forest of Arden have been restored: this Arden evokes danger, discomfort and homelessness, just as the forest did in Shakespeare's time. It undermines contemporary 'back to nature' nostalgia just as the original mocked the idealising conventions of pastoral drama. On the other hand, the film shows with relish the easy ability of the banished duke and his courtiers to adjust to their enforced exile and to enjoy the benefits of this new outlook on life.

Thus the film gives force to Celia's chosen exile, "to freedom not to banishment", as she assumes the name and point of view of 'Aliena'. For once this character is given her full due as the witty, ironic counterpoint to the love-sick Rosalind, putting love to the test with tomboyish abandon. Likewise, the City interior translates perfectly the ethos of the Tudor Court to the ethos of Post-Thatcherism. When Orlando says to Adam, "Thou art not for the fashion of these times, where none will sweat but for promotion", Adam's reply could be taken in modern terms to mean that, as an octogenarian, he can't be a 'yuppie'.

The opposition of Court/City to Forest/Inner City wasteland, of ruthlessness, ambition, greed, fear and dissatisfaction to flexibility, acceptance, generosity and sharing, is embedded in the very textures and gestures of the film. Glass chandeliers, glass doors and mirrors in the Court interior fade into the pools of rain-water in the free space of Arden. The recycling of polythene from tents to curtains to the

transparent layers of the brides' dresses in the finale, and the wrapping of venison from the hunt in cellophane, play wittily on period incongruities, doubling and transparency. The illusions that spring from detailed attention to décor, sets, lighting and music become the essence of the film's *mise en scène* and its meaning.

In the scene where each participant picks up the declaration of love, "And I for..." (ending with Rosalind, as Ganymede, turning it into "And I for no woman..."), the camera moves from face to face, creating a vertiginous gallery of portraits. Edzard focuses on monologues and dialogues only to move away and reveal omnipresent audiences and points of view. With the émigré's fresh appreciation of the rhythms of the English language, the musicality of everyday social repartee and word play, Edzard lets the "verse swing", as Tynan put it.

Offering the familiar speech, "The world's a stage", unaccented, as a prologue, Edzard signals that the film will work through doubles and reflections. When it is repeated in its proper context, this time with feeling, the speech is revealed as Jaques' point of view, rather than as unquestioned universal truth. The device is made intrinsic to the plot, enhancing Rosalind and Celia's double roles, and the two sides of foolery represented by Touchstone and Jaques, with all the actors playing two parts, 'bad' and 'good' brother, banished and usurping courtier. At the climax, each character confronts his/her opposite, recalling the sublime ending of *The Fool*, where the poor accountant meets himself in his other role as Sir John, and resolves the problem of his authenticity with the composition of a libertarian ballad.

For Shakespeare, social order reflected cosmic order and had to be restored to satisfy the conditions of a happy ending. When Orlando says, "I can live no longer by thinking", this is a signal for Rosalind to stop playing. As the titles begin to roll, each player looks at his or her counterpart in recognition and acceptance - brother to brother, courtier to courtier, lover to lover - intercut with the pages singing "Sweet lovers love the Spring". Edzard jettisons Rosalind's "As you like it" epilogue addressed to the audience for a multi-layered montage.

She juxtaposes the 'happy ending' of the lovers' embrace with Jaques' departure and the question of the forest, as she began with Jaques arrival and the question of roles ("All the world's a stage..."). Jaques - who worries about defacing trees and hunting animals, who observes the harmony of the lovers with wistfulness and admires Touchstone, 'the fool' - walks away over the bridge in the background, continuing to seek in exile the home of the self. Edzard restores to filmed Shakespeare the means and immediacy of cinema, daring to present, as the theatre has been doing since the nineteenth century, Shakespearean text in a modern context.

Iiona Halberstadt

Beauty and the Beast

USA 1991

Directors: Gary Trousdale, Kirk Wise

Certificate

U

Distributor

Warner Bros

Production Company

Walt Disney Company

In association with

Silver Screen

Partners IV

Executive Producer

Howard Ashman

Producer

Don Hahn

Associate Producer

Sarah McArthur

Senior Production

Co-ordinator

Rozanne Cazan

Production Co-ordinators

Charlie Desrochers

Kevin Wade

Production Managers

Baker Bloodworth

Florida:

Tom O'Donnell

Pre-production Manager

Ron Rocha

Casting

Albert Tavares

NY Associate:

Matt Messinger

Screenplay

Linda Woolverton

Story Artistic Supervisor

Roger Allers

Story

Brenda Chapman

Burny Mattinson

Brian Pimental

Joe Ranft

Kelly Asbury

Christopher Sanders

Kevin Harkey

Bruce Woodside

Tom Ellery

Robert Lence

Camera Manager

Joe Juliano

Colour

Technicolor

Animation Camera

Supervisor

John Cunningham

Animation Camera

John Aardal

Mary Lescher

Gary W. Smith

Digitising Camera

Supervisor:

Robyn Roberts

Operators:

Tina Baldwin

Jo Ann Breuer

Karen China

Bob Cohen

Lynnette Cullen

Gary Fishbaugh

Cindy Garcia

Kent Gordon

Optical Camera

Allen Gonzales

Live-action Reference

Sherri Stoner

Dan McCoy

Peter Hastings

Live-action Video Crew

Al Vasquez

David Weiss

Visual Effects

Artistic Supervisors

Randy Fullmer

Florida:

Barry Cook

Optical Supervisor

Mark Dornfeld

Computer Graphic Images

Artistic Supervisor

Jim Hillin

Effects Graphics

Bernie Gagliano

Scene Planning Supervisor

Ann Tucker

Scene Planning

Dave Thomson

Annamarie Costa

Animation Check

Supervisor

Janet Bruce

Animation Checking

Karen Hepburn

Karen S. Paat

Gary Shafer

Mavis Shafer

Barbara Wiles

Supervising Animators

Belle:

James Baxter

Mark Henn

Beast:

Glen Keane

Gaston:

Andreas Deja

Lumiere:

Nik Ranieri

Cogsworth:

Will Finn

Mrs Potts/Chip:

Dave Pruksma

Maurice:

Ruben A. Aquino

Le Fou:

Chris Wahl

Philippe:

Russ Edmonds

Animators

Belle:

Michael Cedeno

Randy Cartwright

Lorna Cook

Ken Duncan

Doug Krohn

Mike Nguyen

Beast:

Anthony DeRosa

Aaron Blaise

Geefwee Boedoe

Broose Johnson

Tom Sito

Brad Kuha

Ellen Woodbury
Cynthia Overman
Le Fou:
Rick Farniloe
Lennie Graves
Wolves:
Larry White
Wardrobe:
Tony Anselmo
Layout Artistic Supervisors
Ed Ghermer
Florida:
Robert Walker
Background Artistic Supervisors
Lisa Keene
Florida:
Richard John Sluiter
Background
Doug Ball
Donald Towns
Phil Phillipson
Robert E. Stanton
Tia Kratter
John Emerson
Jim Coleman
Cristy Maltese
Dean Gordon
Tom Woodington
Diana Wakeman
Gregory Alexander
Drolette
Clean-up Artistic Supervisors
Vera Lanpher
Florida:
Ruben Procopio
Clean-up Animation
Supervising Character Leads
Belle:
Renee Holt
Beast:
Bill Berg
Gaston:
Marty Korth
Cogsworth:
Nancy Kniep
Maurice:
Richard Hoppe
Philippe:
Brian Clift
Objects/Townspiece/
Others:
Vera Lanpher
Clean-up Animation
Character Leads
Lumiere:
Debra Armstrong
Mrs Potts:
Stephan Zupkas
Le Fou:
Emily Juliano
Wolves:
Alex Topete
Objects/Townspiece/
Others:
Dave Suding
Breakdown
Belle:
Wendie Fischer
Tamara Lusher
Anthony Wayne
Michaels
Bryan M. Sommer
Beast:
Kris Heller
James Y. Jackson
Wendy Werner
Gaston:
Robert O. Corley
James Fujii
Lumiere:
Hee Rhan Bae
Edward Gutierrez
Cogsworth:
Beverly Adams
Bill Thinn
Maurice:
Norma Rivera
Elizabeth Watsan
Philippe:
Allison Hollen
Objects/Townspiece/
Others:
Noreen Beasley
Inna Chon
Kellie Deron Lewis
Cheryl Polakow
Martin Schwartz
Ron Westlund
Dave Woodman
Inbetweeners
Belle:
Elliot M. Bour
Ken Kinoshita
Beast:
Travis Blaise

Vincent DeFrances
Paul McDonald
Charles R. Vollmer
Gaston:
Lillian Chapman
Anthony Cipriano
Laurey Foulkes
Dylan Kohler
Mary-Jean Repchuk
Lumiere:
Maurilio Morales
Cogsworth:
Marsha Park
Philippe:
Jacqueline M. Sanchez
Wolves:
Grant Hiestand
Objects/Townspiece/
Others:
Ken Hettig
Tom LaBaff
Jane Misk
Kevin Smith
Michael Swofford
Daniel A. Wawrzaszek
Rough Inbetweeners
Kent Culotta
Eric Walls
Henry Sato Jr
David Zabolki
**Objects/Townspiece/
Others Corrections**
Diana Falk
Miriam McDonnell
John Ramirez
Special Effects
Supervising Animators
Dave Bossert
Dorise Lanpher
Ted Kierscy
Mark Myer
Special Effects Animators
Ed Coffey
Chris Jenkins
Christine Harding
Eusebio Torres
Kelvin Yasuda
**Special Effects Breakdown/
Inbetweeners**
Kennard Betts
Peter DeMund
Paul Lewis
Masa Oshiro
Kristine Brown
Sandra Groeneveld
Dan Lund
Lisa Ann Reinert
Tony West
Computer Animation
Linda Bel
Greg Griffith
James R. Tooley
Key Layout/Workbook
Dan St. Pierre
Fred Craig
Tom Shannon
Thom Enriquez
Larry Leker
Lorenzo Martinez
Tanya Wilson
Rasoul Azadani
Bill Perkins
Blue Sketch
Madlyn O'Neill
Visual Development
Kelly Asbury
Joe Grant
Kevin Lima
Sue C. Nichols
Michael Ceden
Jean Gillmore
Dave Molina
Christopher Sanders
Terry Shakespeare
Colour Models Supervisor
Karen Comella
Colour Model Mark-up
Leslie Ellery
Rhonda L. Hicks
Beth Ann McCoy
Dance Sequence Models
Mary Anderson
Duane May
Ink and Paint Manager
Gretchen Maschmeyer
Albrecht
Final Check
Hortensia M. Casagran
Teri McDonald
Saskia Raevouri
Paint Supervisor
Hortensia M. Casagran
Paint Mark-up
Irma Velez
Micki Zurcher
Painting
Carmen Sanderson
Phyllis Bird

Russell Blandino
Sherrie Cuzzort
Phyllis Fields
Paulino Garcia
DeMingo
Anne Hazard
David Karp
Harlene Cooper-Mears
Deborah Jane
Mooneyham
Karen Nugent
Leyla C. de Pelaez
Bruce Phillipson
Heidi Shellhorn
Fumiko Roche Sommer
Britt Vandernagel
Susan Wileman
Digital:
Thomas Cardone
Digitising Mark-up
Gina Wooten
Compositing
James 'JR' Russell
David J. Rowe
Shannon Fallis-Kane
Editor
John Carnochan
Associate Editor
Gregory Perler
Art Director
Brian McEntee
Character Sculptures
Ruben Procopio
Kenny Thompkins
Stained Glass Design
Mac George
Music
Alan Menken
Music Director
David Friedman
Orchestrations
Danny Troob
Additional:
Michael Starobin
Music Producer
Howard Ashman
Alan Menken
Supervising Music Editor
Kathleen Bennett
Songs
"Belle" by Howard Ashman, Alan Menken, performed by Paige O'Hara; "Gaston" by Howard Ashman, Alan Menken, performed by Jesse Corti, Richard White; "Be Our Guest" by Howard Ashman, Alan Menken, performed by Jerry Orbach, Angela Lansbury, David Ogden Stiers; "Something There" by Howard Ashman, Alan Menken, performed by Paige O'Hara, Robby Benson; "Loreau and the Beast" by Howard Ashman, Alan Menken, performed by (1) Angela Lansbury, (2) Celine Dion, Peabo Bryson; "The Mob Song" by Howard Ashman, Alan Menken, performed by Richard White
Title Design
Saxon/Ross Film Design
Titles/Opticals
Buena Vista Visual Effects
Sound Editors
Julia Evershade
Michael Benavente
Jessica Gallavan
J.H. Arrufat
Ron Bartlett
Music Sound Recordists
Michael Farrow
John Richards
ADR Recordists
Doc Kane
Vince Caro
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Terry Porter
Mel Metcalfe
David J. Hudson
Denis Blackerby
Sound Effects
Mark Mangini
Dave Stone
Special: John P. Additional:
Drew Newman

Special Vocal Effects
Frank Welker
Foley
Taj Soundworks
Buena Vista Sound East
Artists:
John Roesch
Catherine Rowe
Vanessa Theme Ament
Consultants
Optical:
Peter Montgomery
Production:
Hans Bacher
Mel Shaw
Production Assistants
Kirk Bodyfelt
Holly E. Bratton
Kevin L. Briggs
Greg Chalekian
Matthew Garbera
Sean Hawkins
Eric Lee
Tod Marsden
Karena Mazur
Janet McLaurin
Laura Perrotta
Laurie Sacks
Dale A. Smith
Christopher Tapia
Kevin Traxler
Anthony Faust Rocco
Voices
Paige O'Hara
Belle
Robby Benson
Beast
Richard White
Gaston
Jerry Orbach
Lumiere
David Ogden Stiers
Cogsworth/Narrator
Angela Lansbury
Mrs Potts
Bradley Michael Pierce
Chip
Rex Everhart
Maurice
Jesse Corti
Le Fou
Hal Smith
Philippe
Jo Anne Worley
Wardrobe
Mary Kay Bergman
Kath Soucie
Bimbettes
Brian Cummins
Stove
Alvin Epstein
Bookseller
Tony Jay
Monsieur D'Arque
Alec Murphy
Baker
Kimmy Robertson
Featherduster
Frank Welker
Footstool
Jack Angel
Bruce Adler
Scott Barnes
Vanna Bonta
Maureen Brennan
Liz Callaway
Philip Clarke
Margery Daley
Jennifer Darling
Albert de Ruiter
George Dvorsky
Bill Farmer
Bruce Fifer
Johnson Flucker
Larry Hansen
Randy Hansen
Mary Ann Hart
Alex Korey
Phyllis Kube
Heardon Lackey
Sherry Lynn
Mickie McGowan
Larry Moss
Panchali Null
Wilbur Pauley
Jennifer Perito
Caroline Peyton
Patrick Pinney
Cynthia Richards-Hewes
Phil Proctor
Stephani Ryan
Gordon Stanley
Stephen Sturk
Additional Voices

7,584 feet
84 minutes



...a will o' the wisp, a clown

France in the eighteenth century. A proud, selfish prince turns away an old woman begging for alms; revealing herself to be an enchantress, she transforms him into a monstrous beast. She gives him a rose, telling him that only if he can be loved before the rose loses all its petals, will he return to human form. Several years later: in a small village lives Belle, the beautiful daughter of Maurice, an eccentric inventor mocked by all. Belle is ardently pursued by the self-important hunter Gaston, but Belle is interested only in reading books.

One day, Maurice sets out for a fair, to display his elaborate new logging machine. Lost in a forest, he arrives at the Beast's gloomy, deserted castle, and is met by its servants, animated household objects: Cogsworth, a clock; Lumiere, a candle; and the teapot, Mrs Potts, and her cup son Chip. But the enraged Beast imprisons Maurice and only agrees to release him when Belle, alerted by her father's horse to his plight, arrives at the castle and promises to stay in his place. Belle is welcomed by the servants, and the assembled kitchen utensils lay on a spectacular dinner-show for her.

Given the freedom of the castle, Belle is told she can go anywhere except the East Wing; spurred by curiosity, however, she disobeys and there, amidst decay, finds the wilting rose. After an outburst by the Beast, Belle breaks her promise and leaves the castle, only to be attacked by wolves. The Beast rescues her and is wounded. Belle nurses him back to health and a romance burgeons between them. Back in the village, Maurice tries to tell the villagers about the Beast, but is mocked. Gaston sees a chance to win Belle as his wife, and bribes the asylum keeper Monsieur D'Arque to lock Maurice away, planning to persuade Belle to marry him in return for his release. Looking into the Beast's magic mirror, Belle sees her father ill, and returns to the village with the heart-broken Beast's approval.

As she returns, D'Arque comes to take Maurice away; Belle and her

father are locked in a cellar while Gaston sets off with the villagers to kill the Beast. But the pair are released, with the help of the logging machine, by Chip, who has smuggled himself from the castle with Belle. She rushes back to the castle, where the disconsolate Beast is unwilling to offer any resistance to his attackers. The villagers are driven off by the servants, and with Belle's encouragement, the Beast fights and defeats Gaston. The Beast seems on the point of death, but the spell is broken and he turns back into the prince. He and Beauty are united at last, and the castle returns to its former glory, while the servants resume human form.

Beauty and the Beast has always seemed to be the most double-edged of moral fairy-tales. While it supposedly illustrates the premise that beauty (or ugliness) is only skin-deep, its *raison d'être* hangs on the promise of the Beast returning to his 'real' handsome form - which seems a betrayal of the tale's subversive potential. In this Disney version, as in Cocteau's, the bland prince is given deservedly short shrift - his initial metamorphosis and final 'happy ever after' reward are presented as inexpressively stylised stained-glass tableaux, recalling the chocolate-box flatness of Disney's 1959 *Sleeping Beauty*, of which this tale is after all a direct reversal.

The fable's play on the riddles of surface and depth makes it the ideal vehicle for animation, and directors Trousdale and Wise have achieved a remarkable play-off of two different kinds of depth illusion. On the one hand, there is the traditional Disney technique of rich background and frantically bustling detail (especially in the 'Belle' sequence, where the heroine, Keaton-like, waltzes unscathed through a succession of perils); on the other, the paradoxical solidity of computer animation, which in the ballroom scene achieves a quasi-mystical sense of frozen, impossible space. As the loving couple waltz ecstatically, a glittering hall of swirling chandeliers

and marbled flooring whirls around them in modish virtual-reality fashion; the two levels of animation blend brilliantly, but the match is still as unsettling and thrilling as the sight of Dick Van Dyke dancing with cartoon penguins must have been in 1964.

The film's characters and settings refer quite knowingly to their forebears and sources. The French flavour, the village setting and much of the castle atmosphere are a nod to Cocteau; while the nightmare element, the wolves and the massing shadows of the Beast himself refer back to moments like the "Bald Mountain" sequence in *Fantasia*. The film is shameless about the provenance of its characters, recognising that the more generically rooted they are, the more resonant (after *The Little Mermaid*, which seemed to strain to devise a whole new school of original characters). Belle is halfway between Julie Andrews in *The Sound of Music* and a sexier, sassier Wilma Flintstone. Only the Beast is generally free of such reference. Half bull, half St. Bernard, he is most effective early on as a lumbering mass of inchoate shadow; it is only later, preening for the ball, that he takes on shades of the Cowardly Lion in his ribbons and bows.

If these echoes work to the film's advantage, the castle servants are its flaw. The Laurel and Hardy pairing of the pompous clock and the foppish candle is too fussy and facile, and too much a re-run of the mice in *Sleeping Beauty*. More troublesome is Angela Lansbury's annoyingly arch Cockney teapot (mysteriously cursed with an American-accented child, the repellently cute Chip) – she brings at once an unwelcome touch of the simpering class-consciousness of *Upstairs Downstairs* and an echo of her own appearance in *Bedknobs and Broomsticks*, a reminder of the old school of 60s/70s Disney mawkishness.

If this is very much a film of good and bad bits, that is because of the way the armies of animators (some 600) have been marshalled, with each major character getting his, her or its character animators and clean-up animators. The music, however, is the film's most consistent feature, showing that writers Howard Ashman and Alan Menken – of *The Little Shop of Horrors* – have been studying their Sondheim. The brisk, acidic style of *Into the Woods* dominates the film's first half, which has more of the resonance of the cynical Broadway musical than of the traditional Disney ditty; at his best, lyricist Ashman – who died last year, and was also the film's executive producer – shows dextrous rhyming skill, notably in "Belle", as the villagers puzzle over the heroine's book-ridden weirdness (given the Andrews resemblance, they could be asking, "How do you solve a problem like Belle?"). Fragmented as it is, this is the most stylish Disney animation in years, and its satisfying tear-jerker ending is marred only by one worry – if all the castle servants have resumed human form, what will the loving couple do for cutlery?

Jonathan Romney

California Man

USA 1992

Director: Les Mayfield

Certificate

PG

Distributor

Warner Bros

Production Company

Hollywood Pictures

In association with

Touchwood Pacific

Partners I

Executive Producer

Hilton Green

Co-executive Producer

Michael Rotenberg

Producer

George Zaloom

Production Co-ordinator

Debbie Austin

Unit Production Manager

Frederic W. Borst

Location Manager

Veronique Vowell

Casting

Kathleen Letterie

Associate:

Nora Kariya

Extras:

C.D. Casting

Assistant Directors

Jerry Ketcham

Roger Mills

Screenplay

Shawn Schepps

Story

George Zaloom

Shawn Schepps

Director of Photography

Robert Brinkmann

Colour

Technicolor

Camera Operator

Alex Leyton

Editors

Eric Sears

Additional:

Jonathan Siegel

Associate Editor

Michael Kelly

Production Designer

James Allen

Set Decorator

Cheryl Kearney

Storyboard Artist

Michael Davis

Special Effects

Co-ordinator

Dennis Dion

Music

J. Peter Robinson

Executive Music Producer

Ralph Sall

Associate Music

Supervisor

Peter McCabe

Music Editors

Tom Kramer

Steve McCroskey

Songs

"Reality Used to

Be a Friend of Mine"

by Attrell Cordes,

performed by PM

Dawn; "Frankenstein"

by Edgar Winter,

performed by The

Edgar Winter Group;

"Zip A Dee Doo Dah"

by Ray Gilbert, Allie

Wrubel; "American

Way" by Wiley Arnett,

Phil Rind, performed

by Sacred Reich;

"Treaty" by M.

Yunupingu, P. Kelly,

G. Yunupingu, M.

Mununggurr, S.

Kellaway, C. Williams,

P. Garrett, H.

Bohannon, performed

by Yothu Yindi; "I'm

Too Sexy, by Fred

Fairbrass, Richard

Fairbrass, Rob Manzoli,

performed by Right

Said Fred; "Wild

Thing" by Chip Taylor,

performed by Cheap

Trick; "Leave My Curl

Alone" by C.

Wilkerson, T. Alvarez,

performed by Hi-C;

"Dusic" by R. Ranson,

R. Hargis, J. Brown,

performed by Brick;

"Stone Cold Crazy"

by Brian May, Roger

Taylor, John Deacon,

Freddie Mercury,

performed by Queen;

"Joy to the World" by

Hoyt Axton; "Young

and Dumb" by Ward

Welch, Almer Brandt,

Brandon Matheson,

John Bernstein,

performed by The

Scream; "Mama Said

Knock You Out" by M.

Williams, James Todd

Smith, performed by

Scatterbrain; "Wooly

Bully" by Sam

Samudio, performed

by The Smithereens;

"Drive the Hell Out

of Here" by and

performed by Steve Vail;

"Rhythm is a Mystery"

by Russ Morgan, Carl

Thomas, Paul Roberts,

Andrew Williams,

performed by K-Klass;

"You Turn Me On"

by Ian Whitcomb,

performed by Crystal

Waters; "Cool Hand

Loc" by Anthony

Smith, Jeffrey Fortston,

Michael Ross, Matt

Dike, performed by

Tone Loc; "Is it My

Body" by Alice Cooper,

Michael Bruce, Dennis

Dunaway, Neil Smith,

Glen Buxton,

performed by Alice

Cooper; "Luxury

Cruiser" by Dan Arlie,

performed by T-Ride;

"Why'd You Want Me"

by William Reed, James

Reid, performed by The

Jesus and Mary Chain;

"Feed the Monkey" by

Michael Muir, Robert

Trujillo, David Dunn,

performed by

Infectious Grooves;

"You're Invited (But

Your Friend Can't

Come)" by Vince Neil,

Jack Blades, Tommy

Shaw, performed by

Vince Neil; "The

Terminator" by and

performed by Brad

Fiedel; "Chandelier

Waltz" by Dan Kirsten

Choreography

Peggy Holmes

Costume Design

Marie France

Costume Supervisors

Ed Fincher

Sharon Rosenberg

Make-up

Key:

Gandhi Bob Arrollo

Artists:

Ben Nye Jr

Margaret E. Elliott

Title Design

Phill Norman

Titles/Opticals

Buena Vista Visual

Effects

Supervising Sound Editor

Joseph Melody

Sound Editors

G. Michael Graham

Dan Luna

Mike Dickinson

Bob Costanza

Gary Macheel

Rick Steele

Dialogue:

Phill Hess

Charles R. Beith

Tim Terusa

Bill Bell

Rusty Tinsley

A. David Marshall

David Eichhorn

Supervising ADR Editor

Kristi Johns

Supervising Foley

Mark Freidgen

Sound Recordists

Robert Allan Wald

Music:

John Richards

ADR Recordist

David Gertz

Foley Recordists

David Gertz

Bruce Bell

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Rick Ash

David Campbell

Dean A. Zupancic

Larry Pitman

Foley Artists

Jill Schachne

Tim Chilton

Palaeontology Consultant

Eric Scott

Production Assistants

Bob Barry

Laure Bost

Nicole Dintaman

Jason Anthony Gaudio

Dan Gillett

Vincent G. Gonzales

Donald S. Petersen

Jim Sgrignoli

Amy Shew

Tracy Thomas

Stunt Co-ordinator

Gil Combs

Stunts

Greg Brickman

Buzz Bundy

Christina Combs

Gary Davis

Chris Durand

Spiro Razatos

Animal Trainer

Jacqueline Kaptan

Cast

Sean Astin

Dave Morgan

Brendan Fraser

Link

Pauly Shore

Stoney Brown

Megan Ward

Robyn Sweeney

Robin Tunney

Ella

Michael DeLuise

Matt

Patrick Van Horn

Phil

Dalton James

Will

Rick Ducommun

Mr Brush

Jonathan Quan

Kim

Mariette Hartley

Mrs Morgan

Richard Masur

Mr Morgan

Ellen Blain

Teena Morgan

Esther Scott

Carry On Columbus

United Kingdom 1992

Director: Gerald Thomas

Certificate
PG
Distributor
UIP
Production Company
Island World
Productions/Comedy
House Production
In association with Peter
Rogers Productions
Executive Producers
Peter Rogers
Audrey Skinner
Producer
John Goldstone
Production Co-ordinator
Lorraine Fennell
Assistant Directors
Gareth Tandy
Terry Bamber
Becky Harris
Screenplay
Dave Freeman
Director of Photography
Alan Hume
In colour
Camera Operator
Martin Hume
Editor
Chris Blunden
Production Designer
Harry Pottle
Art Director
Peter Childs
Set Decorator
Denise Exshaw
Scenic Artist
Ted Michell
Special Effects
Effects Associates
Prosthetics
Ear:
Aaron Sherman
Music
John Du Prez
Song
"Carry on Columbus" by
Malcolm McLaren, Lee
Gorman, performed by
Jayne Collins, Debbie
Holmes
Choreography
Peter Gorden
Costume Design
Phoebe De Gaye
Wardrobe
Ken Crouch
Sue Honeyborne
Make-up Artists
Chief:
Sarah Monzani
Amanda Knight
Title Design
Gillie Potter
Titles/Opticals
General Screen
Enterprises
Sound Editors
Dialogue:
Alan Paley
Dubbing:
Peter Horrocks
Sound Recordists
Chris Munro
Music
Ross Trevor
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Otto Snel
Kevin Taylor
Michael Carter
Foley
Richard Hiscott
Boat Consultant
David Raine
Stunt Co-ordinator
Jason White
Stunt Double
Paul Jennings
Cast
Jim Dale
Christopher Columbus
Peter Richardson
Bart
Alexei Sayle
Achmed
Sara Crowe
Fatima

Bernard Cribbins
Mordecai Mendoza
Julian Clary
Diego
Richard Wilson
Don Felipe
Keith Allen
Pepi
Nigel Planer
Wazir
Rik Mayall
Sultan
Andrew Bailey
Genghis
Burt Kwouk
Wang
Tony Slattery
Baba
Martin Clunes
Martin
Sara Stockbridge
Nina the Model
James Faulkner
Torquemada
Maureen Lipman
Countess Esme
Holly Aird
Maria
Su Douglas
Countess Joanna
Jon Pertwee
Duke of Costa Brava
Leslie Phillips
King Ferdinand
June Whitfield
Queen Isabella
Nejdet Sahli
Fayid
Don Henderson
Bosun
Rebecca Lacey
Chiquita
Larry Miller
Chief
Crowd Artists
Minnie
Prudence Solomon
Haha
Peter Gorden
Shaman
Peter Gilmore
Governor
Silvestre Tobias
Abdullah
Mark Arden
Mark
Jack Douglas
Marco
Danny Peacock
Tonto
Marc Sinden
Captain Perez
Lynda Baron
Meg
T. P. McKenna
Priest
Allan Corduner
Sam
David Boyce
Customer
Harold Berens
Cecil
John Antrobus
Manservant
Dave Freeman
Duncan Duff
Jonathan Taffel
James Pertwee
Toby Dale
Michael Hobbs
Inquisitors
Don Maclean
Inquisitor with
Sandwich
Chris Langham
Hubba
Charles Fleischer
Pontiac
Philip Herbert
Ginger
Reed Martin
Pocohontas
8,176 feet
91 minutes

1492. The Sultan of Turkey, whose wealth depends on the taxes he imposes on merchants travelling overland to and from the Orient, is horrified to hear of plans to find a direct sea route to the Far East. He sends two spies, Achmed and Fatima, on a mission of sabotage. The man preparing to undertake this journey is Christopher Columbus, an Italian living in Lisbon, who is given an ancient Hebrew map of the route by Mordecai Mendoza. Columbus, his brother Bart and Mendoza travel to Spain to raise the money for the trip, despite Mendoza's anxieties about the fate of Jews at the hands of the Inquisition. The King and Queen of Spain agree to finance the voyage, though the King suspects that his wife's interest in Columbus has lustful undertones.

Columbus assembles his crew, largely made up of refugees from the Inquisition and inmates from the local prison. Also on board are Diego, the prison's flamboyant governor, and Don Felipe, an accountant sent by the King to keep an eye on things. Two late recruits are Achmed and Fatima, the latter disguised as a boy and hired as Columbus' personal steward. *En route*, the ship picks up the Countess Esmeralda, her daughter and entourage.

Achmed and Fatima, as instructed, scheme to sabotage the journey, but Fatima falls in love with Columbus and declares her true identity to him. The crew eventually mutiny, but their plans to execute the captain are interrupted when land is finally sighted. Ashore, Columbus and a landing party meet the local Indians, who are far from the primitive pushovers they were expecting. After an expedition to the treacherous goldmines, Columbus is tricked by the Indian chief into exchanging guns and ammunition for a cargo of fake gold. Columbus fears the King's wrath on returning to Spain, but a sleight of hand by Bart saves the day. Columbus and Fatima marry on board ship and she invites him to inaugurate their nuptial night with the words "Carry on Columbus."

As Columbus prepares to set sail, his motley crew are inspecting their quarters. Diego (Julian Clary resplendently swathed in layers of purple and a jumbo-sized codpiece) organises the cabin that he is to share with Don Felipe. "If you get lonely," he assures his new room-mate, "you can come up my end". It has been a long wait, but the *Carry On* team are finally back.

Given the years that have elapsed since 1978's *Carry On Emmanuel*, and the elevation of the whole series to the status of a national institution, *Columbus* is inevitably a film that carries a lot of baggage. To consider it as a discrete text would not only be improper but impossible, since it only makes sense if looked at in terms of its own past. It's a film that is constantly looking over its shoulder with a saucy wink, pulling out yellowing family snapshots, obsessed with its relationship to its venerable, or notorious, predecessors.



His end: Jim Dale

While there are no specific references to particular movies, connoisseurs will detect hints of *Spying*, *Jack*, *Henry* and *Up the Jungle*. But overall there is a feeling that the whole gang is present in the minds of performers, producers and audiences alike. As with a favourite recipe, *Columbus* diligently serves up the familiar ingredients of historical irreverence, pun-strewn predictability and shameless smut.

Rik Mayall's career-long debt to Kenneth Williams is striking – the nostrils, the curled lip, the supercilious fatuousness Maureen Lipman has the old nag role that either Joan Sims or Hattie Jacques occupied innumerable times, while Sara Crowe (of Philadelphia Cheese advertisement fame) not only gets Barbara Windsor's bosomy feistiness exactly right but turns in the best performance of the film. Keith Allen also excels as the kind of second-string character that Peter Butterworth so memorably incarnated. Julian Clary delivers the expected amalgam of Williams and Hawtrey, and although his performance is a little cramped, he is entrusted with many of the best innuendos and has one all-too-brief flamenco dance scene that Hawtrey himself might have envied.

The old guard, Bernard Cribbins and Jack Douglas, anchor the film's identity, while June Whitfield and Leslie Phillips as the flirtatious Queen and petulant King of Spain, deliver a couple of delicious scenes. Jim Dale tackles the central role with surprising skill and, as dirty old manhood beckons, could be on the way to becoming a decent substitute for Sid James.

So how does *Columbus* rate within the canon? It's too early to say – and this isn't critical cold feet. *Carry On* films have to be lived in before their familiarity gets under your skin, like ridiculous pieces of furniture or dotty downstairs neighbours. However, while *Carry On Columbus* is far from the disaster it might have been, there is a certain timidity that disappoints. Where, for example, are the scurrilous character names, where are the flagrantly unconvincing drag scenes, and all those other puritan-baiting gags that we used to relish? *Columbus* suffers from an excessive carefulness which at times treats the film like a precious relic that needs gentle handling, and it is left to the American cast, hamming it up as the Indians, to disregard this inappropriate caution. The end result, to raise the stakes and gratuitously invoke Barthes, is a text of pleasure rather than a text of bliss.

Andy Medhurst

Christopher Columbus: The Discovery

USA 1992

Director: John Glen

Certificate
PG
Distributor
Rank
Production Company
Peel Enterprises
Executive Producer
Jane Chaplin
Producers
Alexander Salkind
Ilya Salkind
Co-producer
Bob Simmons
Associate Producer
Maria Gatti de Montréal
Production Executive
Pauline Couteleng
Production Co-ordinators
Trudy Daoudal
Lili Cordell
Bi Benton
Carol Juk
Allison Millican
Production Manager
Victor Albarran
Unit Production Managers
Sara Fuller
Buck Allen
Location Managers
Mike Higgins
Carmen Martinez
Eric Matthews
José La Correia
Casting
Michelle Guish
Additional:
Ellen Jacoby
Vicki Huff
Philip Mizzi
Margarida Roberto
Assistant Directors
Brian Cook
Peter Bennett Snr
Tony Adler
Peter Bennett Jnr
Dominic Fysh
Carl Goldstein
Joao Fonseca
Screenplay
John Briley
Cary Bates
Mario Puzo
Story
Mario Puzo
Directors of Photography
Alec Mills
Ocean Voyage:
Arthur Wooster
Panavision
Colour
Technicolor
Camera Operators
Mike Frift
Malcolm MacIntosh
Jimmy Davis
Ocean Voyage:
Martin Hume
Special Optical Effects
The Magic Camera
Company
Editor
Matthew Glen
Production Designer
Gil Parrondo
Art Directors
Terry Pritchard
Luis Koldo
José Maria Alarcon
Robb Wilson King
Set Dressers
Julian Mateos
Tighe Barry
Special Effects Supervisor
John Richardson
Special Effects
J.B. Jones Inc
Mario Cassar
Jerry Ciantar
Francisco Garcia
Music
Cliff Eidelman
Music Director
Gerard Schwarz
Music Performed by
Seattle Symphony
Seattle Symphony
Chorale
Music Editor
Robin Eidelman
Costume Design
John Bloomfield
Marlon Brando:
Germinal Rangel
Costume Supervisor
Reg Samuel
Wardrobe
Martin Diaz
Make-up Artists
Linda Gill
Julie Houle
Titles
G.S.E.
Supervising Sound Editor
Vernon Messenger
Sound Recordists
Peter J. Devlin
Music
Tim Boyle
Sound Re-recordists
David Howe
Dana Meeks
Neal Anderson
Pat Sellars
Brian McPherson
Laura Harris
Advisers
Historical:
Juan Gil
Consuelo Varela
Indian:
Manuel Garcia Arevalo
Special Project:
Berta Dominguez
Religious Music:
Father Galea
Production Assistants
Malcolm Ferrante
Raymond Sciberras
Torre Newman
Anushka Paverman
Ashley Fuller
Marc Millhen
Thomas Francell
Stunt Co-ordinator
Miguel Pedregosa
Stunts
Inosencio Losada
José Maria Serrano
Joaquin Olias
Pedro Araez
Luis Miguel Arranz
Alvaro Quiroga
Julio Pimental
Gregg Michaels
Louis Roth
Tall Ships Master
Gus Pollard
Cast
Marlon Brando
Tomas de Torquemada
Tom Selleck
King Ferdinand
George Corraface
Cristobal Colon
Rachel Ward
Queen Isabella
Robert Davi
Martin Alonso Pinzon
Catherine Zeta Jones
Beatriz
Oliver Cotton
Harana
Benicio Del Toro
Alvaro
Mathieu Carrière
King John of Portugal
Manuel de Blas
Vicente Pinzon
Glyn Grain
Juan de la Cosa
Peter Guinness
Fra Perez

Nigel Terry
Roldan
Nitzan Sharron
Benjamin
Steven Hartley
Terreros
Hugo Blick
De Torres
Nigel Harrison
Gonzalo
Chris Hunter
Morales
Simon Dormandy
Bives
Christopher Chaplin
Escobedo
Michael Gothard
Inquisitor's Spy
Clive Arrindell
Lord Guarco
Richard Cubison
Isaac
Mark Long
Joseph
Nicholas Selby
Monsignor Camos
John Grillo
Chios Mapmaker
Serge Malik
Alcade of Malaga
Joseph Long
1st Alcaquil

Branscombe Richmond
Indian Chieftain
Tailinh Forest Flower
Indian Girl
Anthony Sarda
Indian Brave
Gerard Langlais
Indian Guide
Michael Halphie
Chios Vendor
Genevieve Allenbury
Harana's Wife
Michael Gunn
Prison Officer
Vincent Pickering
Healthy Prisoner
Trevor Sellers
Pinta First Mate
Caleb Lloyd
Diego, age 8
Andrew Dicks
Diego, age 11
Georgi Fisher
Fernando
Steven Fletcher
Rodrigo de Triana
Ivan De Sono
Sailor in Tavern
10,868 feet
121 minutes

After acquiring a map from a Turk on the island of Chios, and after six years of investigation, Cristobal Colon presents to King John of Portugal his plan to sail West across the ocean-sea to the Indies. Spurned by the king and in danger from his men, Colon escapes to Spain, where he explains his ideas to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. Though Isabella is enticed by the prospect of Christianising Cathay and Japan, Ferdinand is still too busy fighting the Moors. Colon is also accused of heresy by the Inquisition, and cross-examined by the Grand Inquisitor, Torquemada. The decision goes against him.

Two years later, having defeated the Moors at Malaga, Ferdinand and Isabella reconsider. Isabella feels a sense of debt to God that Spain is now Christian, and besides, "We are hard pressed for treasure". After problems over his excessive financial demands, Colon is equipped with three vessels. He appoints the brothers Martin and Vicente Pinzon as captains of the Pinta and the Niña, while he himself sails on the Santa Maria as captain general, aided by his friend Harana. Among the men he engages for his crew is Alvaro, Harana's estranged son. Colon bids a hasty farewell to his beloved Beatriz, and sets sail.

The voyage is beset with misfortune: one of the crew, Roldan, has been bribed by the Portuguese to make sure the ship never returns, and makes repeated attempts at sabotage. Fear meanwhile leads some of the crew to lose hope and beg Colon to turn back. Fights break out; a man is killed and buried at sea. There is joy when land is sighted, but it turns out to be merely distant cloud formations. When Colon himself begins to doubt, mutineers seize the ship. After negotiation with the captains of the three vessels, Colon is given three days' grace. He insists that even then he will not turn back, and would sooner die. There is a violent storm; Roldan, discovered once again up to no good, falls overboard during a fight and is taken by sharks. On the morning of the fourth day,

with the executioner's blade poised above Colon's neck, land appears.

Colon and his men disembark on a paradisaical Caribbean island, which he claims for Spain and names San Salvador. The natives are welcoming and give them gold. Martin Pinzon sails off on the Pinta in search of the fabulous wealth they had hoped to find. The Santa Maria runs on to rocks and breaks up, and the idyll begins to sour: Colon robs the Indians of their gold and takes six of their men back to Spain on the Niña. He has to leave many of his sailors behind, and they soon succumb to greed and violence; Alvaro kills Harana in a fight. Eventually, the gentle Indians rise up and kill the Spaniards. Colon's journey back to Spain is arduous, and the Pinta arrives before him, but Martin Pinzon is dying. The two men are reconciled. Colon is reunited with Beatriz, and returns to the court in triumph. He tells the king and queen that he has brought Christianity to the Indies, and to Torquemada's evident displeasure, is named Admiral of the Ocean Sea and Vice-Roy of the Indies.

You've seen it before. Act one, the hero prepares. He acquires the emblem of his quest, in this case the map that puts the mad glint in Cristobal Colon's eye, and with it the secret, the knowledge that wind currents will carry his ship across the ocean. Scenes of swordplay and a duplicitous lady of easy virtue. Defeated infidel falls into trays of spices in exotic market. The hero's faith in his enterprise is put to the test. Royal counsellors disparage his scheme, and Torquemada, the head of the Inquisition, finds it heretical. The hero granted his wish. The gathering of the crew. Clothes - a variety of browns, signifiers of a past stretching from time immemorial to the early twentieth century.

Act two, the journey. Cries of "Hoist the top sail!" soon indicate that this voyage into the unknown for Colon won't be one for us. Treachery, a Portuguese spy on board (Nigel Terry, reprising his Caravaggio). Awe, "What is out there?" Doubt, "There's nothing out there. We sail to our death". Fights, a storm at sea, the wreckage of those who went before. Act three, paradise.

Prayers and frolicsome swimming. Under-dressed natives watch from behind light-plashed *Emerald Forest* jungle leaves. Dusky maidens charm the seadogs. Evil white men respond with violence. Act four, the expulsion from paradise, and act five, the return, are intercut. More storms at sea, a deathbed reconciliation, more quayside crowds and a coda at Ferdinand's court - all mercifully rushed.

The most interesting aspect of *Christopher Columbus: The Discovery* is the christological parallels which the writers essay in the first half of the film. First Colon, preparing for his mission, astonishes the wise man (Torquemada) by the sophistication of his theology. Then he gathers his disciples (who will later doubt him), telling them parables using eggs and a melon, which represents the world. Twice he calls out to God to ask why He has forsaken him. On the ship, after three days condemned to death, he is miraculously 'resurrected'. After his arrival in San Salvador, however, Colon suddenly and unexplainedly becomes a callous exploiter of 'heathens'. This no doubt alludes to the violence which the Spaniards went on to perpetrate, but it fits very badly with the character Puzo and co. have laboriously established.

The rest of the script has none of this ambition, ranging from the flat to the risible. "You have a way with women, Colon", says Isabella as she gives him her cross. "I'm from Genoa, your majesty", he replies. Elsewhere, Puzo seems to be trying to forestall the forthcoming *Carry On* version, as Colon describes his ship to Beatriz: "She's a fine vessel. A bit top-heavy and too narrow in the beam. Not unlike someone else I know". Nor is John Glen able to enliven his film with memorable acting. Marlon Brando, as Torquemada, is sagely disdainful of the whole enterprise. Rachel Ward makes an unlikely Queen Isabella, but not as unlikely as Tom Selleck's King Ferdinand, who looks consistently sheepish, rightly surmising that his beard and silly wig will provoke unseemly mirth. Regularly punctuated with bursts of over-orchestrated music, *Christopher Columbus: The Discovery* is bereft of historical curiosity, and is of no more interest as a genre film.

Julian Gaffry



From time immemorial

City of Joy

United Kingdom/France 1992

Director: Roland Joffé

Certificate
12
Distributor
Warner Bros
Production Companies
Lightmotive Ltd
(London)/Pricel (Paris)
Producers
Jake Eberts
Roland Joffé
Lightmotive Executive
Ben Myron
Co-producer
Iain Smith
Production Supervisor
Barrie Melrose
Production Co-ordinator
Sallie Beechinor
Production Managers
Philip Kohler
Local:
Dilip Banerjee
Unit Managers
Ian Hickinbotham
Rashid Abassi
Location Managers
Bill Barringer
Jayanth Kumath
Post-production Supervisor
John Trehy
Post-production Co-ordinator
Cate Arbeid
Casting
Priscilla John
USA:
Nancy Fox
Emily Schweber
Crowd:
Supantha
Bhattacharjee
Assistant Directors
Bill Westley
Gerry Toomey
Cliff Lanning
Adam Somner
Debashish Chatterjee
Screenplay
Mark Medoff
Based on the book by
Dominique LaPierre
Director of Photography
Peter Bizziou
Colour
Eastman Colour
Camera Operators
Mike Roberts
2nd:
Pascal Marti
Video Operator
Bradley Thomas
Editors
Gerry Hambling
Additional:
Russell Lloyd
Clive Barrett
Production Designer
Roy Walker
Supervising Art Director
John Fenner
Art Director
Asoke Bose
Set Decorator
Rosalind Shingleton
Special Effects Supervisor
Nick Alder
Music/Music Director
Ennio Morricone
Original Folk Music
Richard Blackford
Music Performed by
Unione Musicisti
di Roma
Choir:
The Stephen
Hill Singers
Indian Flute:
Mike Taylor
Recorder:
Laura Pontecorvo
Flute:
Paolo Zampini
Piccolo Clarinet:
Stefano Novelli
Panpipes:
Felice Clemente
Raffaele Clemente
Tabla:
Sirish Kumar
Sitar:
Chandra Rameshi
Music Co-ordinator
Enrico de Melis
Orchestrations
Ennio Morricone
Music Supervisor
Richard Blackford
Music Editor
Joe Illing
Songs
"Take It to the Limit"
by Don Henley, Glen
Frey, Randy Meisner;
"Twist and Shout"
by Bert Russell, Phil
Medley; "Sweet Little
Sixteen" by Chuck
Berry
Costume Design
Judy Moorcroft
Wardrobe
Supervisor:
Germinal Rangel
Mistress:
Sujata Sharma
Chief Make-up Artist
Paul Engelen
Make-up Artist
Lynda Armstrong
Titles
Plume Partners
Supervising Sound Editor
Ian Fuller
Sound Editors
Jonathan Bates
Michael Crouch
Martin Evans
Peter Horrocks
Ron Davis
Richard Dunford
Peter Elliot
Sound Recordist
Daniel Brisseau
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordist
Bill Rowe
Consultants
Cultural:
Sunil Gangopadhyay
Medical:
Robert Gale
Lawrence R. Medoff
Stunt Co-ordinator
Greg Powell
Stunts
Lee Sheward
Cast
Patrick Swayze
Max Lowe
Om Puri
Hasari Pal
Pauline Collins
Joan Bethel
Shabana Azmi
Kamla Pal
Ayesha Dhar
Amrita Pal
Santu Chowdhury
Shambu Pal
Imran Badsah Khan
Manooj Pal
Art Malik
Ashoka
Nabil Shaban
Anouar
Debtosh Ghosh
Ram Chander
Suneeta Sengupta
Poomina
Mansi Upadhyay
Meeta
Shyamandaran
Ghatak
Shyamal Sengupta
Gangooly
Rudraprasad Sengupta
Chomotkar
Baroon Chakraborty
Said
Masood Akhtar
Rassoul
Lovleen Mishra
Shanta

Pavan Malhotra
Ashish
Anashua Mujumdar
Selima
Dipti Dave
Schoolgirl
Aloke Roychoudhury
Aristotle John
Siv Sankar Banerjee
Goonda
Alokanda Datta
Schoolgirl's Mother
Chakradhar Jena
Mehboub
Sunil Mukherjee
Hotel Porter
Chetna Jalan
Court Judge
Ravi Jhankal
Obstructing Policeman
Debraj Roy
Binal
Charubala Chokshi
Binal's Wife
Durba Datta
Margareta
Tamal Raichowdhury
Surya
Sanjay Pathak
Shoba
Anjan Dutt
Dr Sunil
Debasish Banerjee
Dr Sunil's Assistant
Swatiksha Sengupta
Hotel Manageress

Sami Ahmad
Bartender
Chhotu Bhai
Rana Mitra
Siddharth Roy
Thugs
Monu Mukherjee
Hamburger Bar Waiter
John Nair
Selima's Son
Subrata Sen Sharma
Minister at Railway Station
Sujan Mukherjee
Subash
Satya Banerjee
Subash's Father
Paresh Ghosh
Saran Chatterjee
Gouri Sankar Panda
Gouri Banerjee
Subash's Uncles
Kajal Chaudhury
Hasari's Mother
Iftekhar
Hasari's Father
Chitra Sen
Angry Woman
Keira Jane Malik
Young Patient
The Arunoday
Theatre Group
Special Crowd

12,107 feet
135 minutes

Calcutta. Hasari Pal, who has just lost his farm to moneylenders and drought, arrives in Calcutta with his family, looking for work. When Max Lowe, an American doctor, is beaten up by Ashoka, the son of Ghatak, the local godfather, Hasari goes to his rescue. Max, who is on a so far unsuccessful search for spiritual fulfilment, after the death of a young patient in America, is taken by Hasari to the City of Joy Self-Help School and Dispensary, run by Joan Bethel to help the city's poor.

While Hasari gets permission to pull a rickshaw (a business controlled by Ghatak), and moves his family into the City, Joan tries to persuade Max to work with her at the City's clinic. At first he refuses, but eventually agrees (after helping a woman suffering from leprosy to give birth) and gets Kamla, Hasari's wife, to be his assistant, which Hasari somewhat resents. When Ghatak demands more protection money from Joan, Max encourages the City's residents to resist, and they move into new premises where they plan to admit lepers.

Ashoka uses this to stir up a violent demonstration against the City; he also razors the face of Poomina, a girl whom Max has been trying to keep out of his clutches, and takes away Hasari's rickshaw. Hasari tells Kamla she must stop working at the clinic, and he becomes even more distrustful of Max. The lepers obtain an old rickshaw for Hasari, which he rebuilds and starts to use outside of Ashoka's jurisdiction. With Ghatak seriously ill, Ashoka raises the rent on rickshaws, provoking a protest by the drivers. Hasari is taken to court, but a restraining order is placed on Ashoka and the drivers are granted the right to strike.

Max is threatened by Ashoka and moves into the City, while Hasari works hard to earn money for his daughter Amrita's wedding. The monsoon arrives, and Max is saved from drowning by Hasari while they are res-

cuing the lepers from their flooded colony. In a final confrontation, Ashoka threatens to razor Amrita. Max intervenes but it is Hasari who bests Ashoka. Hasari is stabbed, but they retrieve a medallion of Max's which provides Hasari with the gold for Amrita's dowry. At the wedding, Max tells Joan he has never felt more alive (he will probably now stay at the clinic), and muses with Hasari on the struggle of life...

In a lengthy essay appended to the publicity notes for *City of Joy*, Roland Joffé waxes exceedingly lyrical about the effect of Calcutta on his vision of life: "In its naked, shameless way, Calcutta mirrors what lies behind our struggle for order: this mess, this chaos, this divine concoction of indifference and cruelty and compassion; this humanness... It taught me, in its complexity, its passion, anger and pettiness, that our individual failings are no more or less than failings of the species; as there are no perfect individuals, there are no perfect races". Although Joffé is here trying to resolve his contradictory feelings about the serious and well-publicised disruptions to his filming caused by local opposition, he also unfortunately sums up the basic problem with the film.

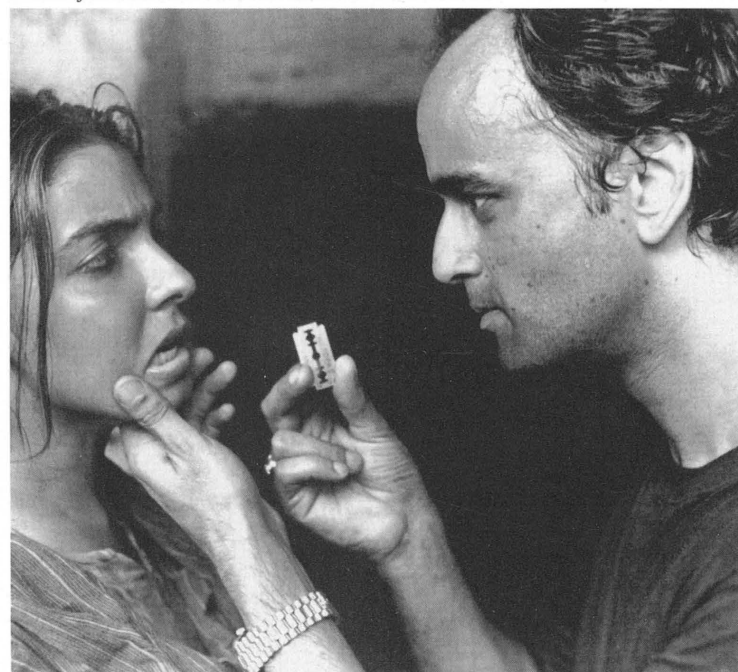
This lies in the overwhelming tendency to use the city as a backdrop against which characters can utter somewhat banal observations about life as a struggle, the need for commitment, the joy of beating the odds, etc. While it is hard to argue with any of the sentiments expressed, there is so little to engage with dramatically that the result is both flat and heavy-handed. The script, for instance, tries nobly but somewhat half-heartedly to make the relationship between Max Lowe and Hasari its centre, and to suggest a mutual process of learning and growing self-awareness. But, by the end, it is noticeable that Hasari has basically learned not to resent his wife

going to work, while Max has undergone a full-blown change of consciousness.

While Hasari is allowed to become action man at certain points (rescuing Max from the flood; defeating Ashoka), the transformation of Max is clearly meant to be taking place on a higher plane. ("You're free to go", suggests Pauline Collins' Joan; "No, I'm free to stay", he replies.) This imbalance also bedevilled the dual protagonists of *The Killing Fields*, *The Mission* and *Shadow Makers*, and *City of Joy* suggests that Joffé's interest in placing characters both within and against the big picture (either historically, geographically or both) is consistently counter-productive. One has the feeling that in his striving for the epic, the 'big picture' indeed, Joffé would like to be David Lean (it seems no coincidence that *The Mission* was written by Robert Bolt). But the interrelationship between character and backdrop in *The Bridge on the River Kwai* and *Lawrence of Arabia* seems ideologically more complex and rigorously scrutinised than anything here.

Indeed, the clearest echo of Lean in *City of Joy* is perhaps the storm scene, which summons memories of *Ryan's Daughter*, a film in which a small story was fatally blown out of all proportion. Here, similarly, the pitting of Hasari, Max and Joan Bethel against the cardboard villainy of Ashoka just cannot support the spiritual burden placed on it. As a symptom of this, certain 'truths' which emerge (particularly Max's hatred of bribery, arising from a troubled childhood, and the use of Géricault's painting "The Raft of the Medusa" to illustrate the importance of hope and love) seem to spring arbitrarily from somewhere else, and as a result lack any resonance. In *City of Joy*, the camera is constantly craning back over crowded streets, a grand movement which simply underlines the lack of connection between the large and small-scale elements of the project.

Steve Jenkins



Against the big picture: Suneeta Sengupta, Art Malik

Gas Food Lodging

USA 1991

Director: Allison Anders



Troubles: lone Skye

Certificate

15

Distributor

Mainline

Production Company

Cineville Partners, Inc

Executive Producers

Carl-Jan Colpaert

Christoph Henkel

Producers

Daniel Hassid

Seth M. Willenson

William Ewart

Line Producer

Albert T. Dickerson III

Associate Producer

Gregor von Bismark

Production Supervisor

Carl Schaefer

Location Manager

Jeff Kirshbaum

Post-production Controller

Robert Strauss

Casting

Richard Pagano

Sharon Bialy

Debi Manwiller

New Mexico:

Janet Cunningham

Assistant Directors

Matthew J. Clark

Rosemary C. Cremonia

Jim Goldthwait

Michael Gillis

Screenplay

Allison Anders

Based on the novel

Don't Look and It Won't Hurt

by Richard Peck

Director of Photography

Dean Lent

Colour

DeLuxe

Opticals

Motion Opticals

Editor

Tracy S. Granger

Production Designer

Jane Ann Stewart

Art Directors

Lisa Denker

Carla Weber

Dresser

Marty Meeks

Storyboard Artist

Pavel Cantu

Music

J Mascis

Violin Performed by

Patty Weiss

Additional Orchestrations

Barry Adamson

Music Supervisors

Kevin Benson

Jerry Ross

Songs

"We Get Along Just Fine" by Mark Fossion,

"Eternity" by Mark Fossion,

Karen Tobin,

"Crazy Heart" by Mark Fossion,

Karen Tobin,

Jan Buckingham, "I'll Be Over You" by Mark Fossion,

Karen Tobin,

Chris Rea, performed by Mark Fossion,

Karen Tobin; "Maria" by Mickey Petralia,

Carlos Adley, performed by The Mitch Green

Experience; "Can't Stop My Heart" by and

performed by Mark Fossion; "Fall in Love with Me" by David Sylvian, performed by Japan; "Insight" by Rich Gonne, Michael Weaver, performed by Antagonist; "Thunder", "Women Respond to Bass" by and performed by Renegade Soundwave; "Lament" by Nick Cave, performed by Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds; "Macarana Cha-Cha" by Lazare; "Magic" by John Farrar, performed by Louise Tollson; "The Sun Before the Darkness" by and performed by Crime and the City Solution; "Cloud Chamber" by and performed by Easy; "Same Sweet You" by Rachel Young; "We Call It Rock" by Don Fleming, Broyhill, performed by The Velvet Monkeys; "Burial" by and performed by Mr Boyd Rice; "Love" by and performed by Victoria Williams

Costume Design

Susan L. Bertram

Wardrobe

Dominique Gomez

Make-up

Lorelei Loverde

Titles

Titles House

Sound Design

Leonard Marcel

Sound Editor

Peter Scott Carlstedt

ADR Supervisor

Phillip Linson

Sound Recordists

Clifford "Kip" Gynn

Brion Pacassi

ADR Recordist

Bob Deschaine

Foley Recordist

David Jobe

Dolby stereo

Consultant:

Steve F.B. Smith

Sound Re-recordist

Stanley Kastner

Sound Effects Editors

Gregory Conway

Sound Effects

Jim Gillam

Foley Artists

Joan Rowe

Greg Barbanell

Consultants

Carlo:

Angelo Martinez

Fluorescent Minerals:

Steve Thomsen

Geological:

Robert Paul Coburn

Production Assistants

Jeff Miller

Fabio Fernandez

Tom Wages

Stand-in
Ione Skye
Christy Sheldon
Scorpion Wrangler
John Warren Albright

Cast
Brooke Adams
Nora Roberts
Ione Skye
Trudi
Fairuzza Balk
Shade
James Brolin
John Evans
Robert Knepper
Dank
David Landsbury
Hamlet Humphrey
Jacob Vargas
Javier
Donovan Leitch
Darius
Chris Mulkey
Raymond
Laurie O'Brien
Thelma
Julie Condra
Tanya
Adam Biesk
Brett
Leigh Hamilton
Kim
Diane Behrens
Hostess

J Mascis
Cecil
Tiffany Anders
Persi
Sissy Boyd
Rocio
Jeffrey McDonald
Long-haired Boy
Bill Kemp
Jock
Graci Lund
Girl
Shirley Smith
Bubbly Mother
Carmen Gonzales
Mexican Woman
Mariah O'Brien
Ivy
Cathryn Balk
Shopkeeper
George Parker
Trucker
Jeff Miller
Rock Boy
Michael Gillis
Young John Evans
M. Eisel
Baby Shade
Josie Lynn Adams
Trudi, age 2
Sparky
Family Puppy
9,106 feet
101 minutes

In the desert town of Laramie, New Mexico, a young girl, Shade, finds solace in the Spanish-speaking cinema. She meets her bratty elder sister Trudi at the roadside diner where their mother Nora is the waitress. Trudi abuses a young Mexican waiter, Javier, and he resigns; that night, in their trailer home, Trudi fights with her mother, who tells her that she must stop skipping school, get a job or leave within the month. Trudi starts working at the diner, but the next time she sees her boyfriend he is with another girl, and he and his friends abuse her. She meets a strange Englishman, Dank, a collector of fluorescent rocks, who drives her home in a courtly fashion.

Having given up on her efforts to contact her long-absent father, Shade decides to find her mother another man. She arranges for a handsome cowboy to have dinner at their trailer, not realising that her mother has just broken off an affair with him because he is married. The meal passes off without incident. Trudi accompanies the rock hunter on a trip into the desert, where they make love in a cave. Afterwards, she confesses that her first sexual experience led to gang rape; Dank says he has to go away for a few days, and gives her a rock as proof of his affection.

On her sister's advice, Shade dresses up like Olivia Newton-John in a bid to seduce her quasi-boyfriend, camp hairdresser Darius. Finding her depressed by the roadside after this ruse has failed, Javier befriends her. Dank doesn't return, and Trudi learns that she is pregnant; against her mother's urging, she determines to have the baby, and goes to a home in Dallas to do so. A girlfriend invites Shade to a party – though she refuses to invite Javier, regarding him as 'dangerous'. Shade is rescued from the attentions of two LA low-lives by a mysterious older man, who turns out to be her father, John Evans. She asks him for money for Trudi, and after an argument with his

current girlfriend, he gives it to her.

At Javier's house, his deaf-mute mother teaches Shade to dance. The two young people become intimate and explore the desert together. Meanwhile, Nora has struck up a relationship with a comical satellite-TV dealer called Hamlet, and the two of them drive Shade to Dallas where Trudi gives birth. She has to give up the baby for adoption, but decides to stay and make a new life for herself. As the others return to Laramie, Shade sees a sign advertising day-glo rocks and she stops, thinking to find Dank and berate him. But he turns out to have died in a landfall, and so did not betray Trudi. This gives Shade hope, both for herself and "the path of daughters not yet born".

An assured and often quite moving debut from American independent Allison Anders, *Gas Food Lodging* was adapted from an obscure paperback novel, *Don't Look and It Won't Hurt*, by Richard Peck. The new title embodies the film's unusual and welcome awareness of the primacy of getting by in a material world, possibly reflecting the director's own experience of working her way through film school as a single mother. The story, as she has adapted it, focuses on the way a family of three very different women define themselves as individuals in the face of various experiences of abuse, rejection and – occasionally – love.

Except for the odd irritating auteurial touch – the director's name turns up conspicuously on a letterhead as the principal of Trudi's school – the film's technique is by and large impressively unaffected. The small-town setting bears some relation to the world of Hal Hartley: the same bright colours, the same big characters on little stages, although the underlying scheme of things is perhaps slightly more conservative. The surrounding desert is skilfully used to create an intriguing balance of emptiness and possibility. Only the central character of Shade comes across rather weakly: the narrated yearnings of adolescent girlhood having been almost as overdone as the boys, and the 'escape to the movies' being a device that, since Terence Davies, scarcely needs repeating.

But Ione Skye swears very effectively as the troubled and troublesome Trudi, and Nora Roberts is an impressively ambiguous figure as the mother – not cloyingly warm and heroic, but fighting a real battle with her own frustrations. The film's most touching moments centre on inadequacy: the father recognising his inability to do what he should, the mother sometimes giving up the struggle to get her children to understand her. It is the conviction with which these failures in communication are rendered that makes the film's eventual comings together – between Shade and Javier (an excellent performance from Jacob Vargas), or Nora and Hamlet – less inevitable and more affecting than might have been expected.

Ben Thompson

The Hours and Times

USA 1991

Director: Christopher Munch

Distributor
ICA Projects
Production Company
Antarctic Pictures
Screenplay
Christopher Munch
Director of Photography
Christopher Munch
Assistant Photography
Juan Carlos Valls
Editor
Christopher Munch
Music Performed by
Guitar Solo:
Carlos Calvo
Piano Solo:
David Loeb

Cast
David Angus
Brian Epstein
Ian Hart
John Lennon
Stephanie Pack
Marianne
Robin McDonald
Quinones
Sergio Moreno
Miguel
Unity Grimwood
Mother

5,400 feet
60 minutes

1963. Travelling by plane to Barcelona with his manager Brian Epstein, Beatle John Lennon wakes to inform his companion he has dreamt about being "a circus clown in Japan". Epstein tells him the dream sounds like "a painting by Matisse". As they order more drinks, a stewardess, Marianne, recognises Lennon, who orders Epstein to give her their Barcelona hotel number. In a taxi from the airport, Epstein reminds his charge that the purpose of their weekend visit is relaxation. At the hotel, a bellboy named Miguel delivers room service to Epstein; after failing to seduce him, the manager takes a sleeping pill.

The next evening, Lennon and Epstein play cards, discuss their past, and make jokes about sex. John receives a call from his wife Cynthia and, before going to bed, Epstein rips an advertisement for Bergman's *The Silence* out of the paper. The pair attend the film, after which John says it would 'shatter' his wife, although Epstein defends Cynthia. He then takes Lennon to Club Bauhaus, an empty gay haunt where they meet a commodities broker called Arturo Quinones. The latter recognises John and comes back to the hotel for drinks. After he leaves, Epstein tries once more, without success, to seduce Miguel.

The next morning, in the park, Lennon insults both Epstein's religion and his sexuality. Back at the hotel, Lennon breaks his afternoon siesta for a bath. Asking Epstein to scrub his back, he reaches up to kiss him. Epstein sheds his clothes and joins John in the bath for more kisses – whereupon the Beatle abruptly departs. The stewardess Marianne appears and Epstein repairs to the hotel lobby, drinking morosely while John and the girl dance to Little Richard. Later, in front of the mirror, John mimics a conversation between Epstein and himself.

In a café, Epstein subsequently explains how he was taken to court for a homosexual offence in West Derby; he then fled to Barcelona for his first visit. Shortly afterwards, back in Liverpool, he met John and the Beatles. On a

bench in the park, Epstein proposes that they meet again in Barcelona in ten years time. Later, they are in bed together, but Lennon is asleep and Epstein, waking, appears surprised to see him. Epstein walks to the window and looks out, hearing the roar of a Spanish bullfight, but recalling how he first took John on to the roof of his parents' Liverpool shop.

In the spring of 1963, when they spent a weekend alone together in Barcelona, did Beatle John Lennon sleep with his gay manager Brian Epstein? Three years after Epstein's suicide in 1967, Lennon went on record to deny it. In Christopher's Munch's film (which ends with Epstein waking to find Lennon asleep beside him), the act – or its possibility – signifies only a psychic inseparability. Instead, *The Hours and Times* focuses on the daily homeliness of this (and many another) relationship: those tensions and tediums which memory later tends to transmute. In this case, of course, the memories are myth – and where Munch's film succeeds is in bringing them back to the ordinary.

Shot in eight days and edited over two years, *The Hours and Times* is dark, improvisatory, and highly under-populated. But since its text is memory, these debits serve a function: they shape the piece like an aged snapshot, a private moment wherein only the persons who mattered need be recalled. Inside that moment, interest arises not from the fame of Munch's two protagonists but from his conjectures about their sexual, economic, and educational differences. Ian Hart's Lennon is callow, ruthless and rude, yet deeply dependent on Epstein (David Angus). Epstein, by contrast, is distantly melancholic, resigned and – when it comes to his charge – reflexively protective. The movie depicts their holiday as identical to the flip side of stardom: the same constant waits, dull dinners, and searching for something to pass the time.

It is a world in which the only new interactions come from strangers, thus focusing both men's attentions on their private bond. By the time they reached Barcelona, each also had reason to know their connection would become 'historic'. *The Hours and Times* offers little more than the rare event of two men talking at length. Yet this conversation is one begun in a maelstrom. The Beatles are becoming a legend; American fame beckons; John's wife has recently given birth to his son. Commanding amazing business achievements, Epstein is gripped by unspeakable fears. Will he be left behind? Has his contribution been noticed? Are there any guarantees, material or emotional? With these emotional stakes as his backdrop, Munch shows us two men conducting a dance around one another, around what they did and did not mean to each other's lives.

As holidaymakers, the pair discuss Elvis, Gaudi, the use of kosher cutlery and pissing in swimming-pools. ►

◀ John takes a call from his wife which reveals an essential misogyny; Epstein phones his mother, propositions a bellboy, relaxes with sleeping pills. The most mundane actions of both men resound with Epstein's desperation: a well of loneliness deep enough to have already shaped – even doomed – his life. All the manager's hopes for surmounting his fate, we see, are pinned on Lennon. Epstein fusses and frets over John, suffers under his compassion and puts up with his scorn. ("You know what Jung'd call you," says Lennon at one point, "a queer Jew!") Still, Epstein perseveres with a dignity which contains defiance – even as we realise John cannot part with sexual control.

For Lennon is, really, this pair's conventional half. Even his talent, and the arrogance it underwrites, are covered in Epstein's fingerprints. In one of the film's cleverest scenes, John faces his hotel-room mirror, trying to master a knot in his tie. Soliloquising both in Epstein's voice and his own, he recites the manager's standard Beatle pep-chant ("Where are we going, boys?" "To the top, Brian!" "And where is that, boys?" "The toppermost of the poppermost!"). Finally, failing at his task, he wrenches off the tie and discards it.

Later that afternoon, Epstein confesses a lynchpin episode of his past to Lennon: just before their meeting, he was caught cottaging, beaten and blackmailed, exposed to his family and in court. His listener sees Epstein as a dependable, singular friend – a surprise mentor in education, fame and middle-class manners. Epstein's story reveals how he sees much, much more in Lennon: this was a young god who reawakened his will to live. The apparition, of course, has already failed Epstein; just as, once he entices Epstein into his bath, Lennon decamps. *The Hours and Times* ends very abruptly – before the weekend is over, before our curiosity is by any means satisfied. But that seems the very point Munch is out to make. Even if these characters are the historical 'Lennon' and 'Epstein', much of their struggle still resides in its timeless commonality.

Cynthia Rose



Aged snapshot: Ian Hart, David Angus

Juice

USA 1992

Director: Ernest R. Dickerson

Certificate

15

Distributor

Electric Pictures

Production Company

Island World

For Paramount

Producers

David Heyman

Neal H. Moritz

Peter Frankfurt

Co-producer

Preston Holmes

Location Manager

Dale Watkins

Post-production

Supervisor

Kerry Orent

Casting

Jaki Brown

Associate:

Darin Brown

Extras:

Winsome Sinclair

Assistant Directors

Dale Pierce

Kia Puriefey

Screenplay

Gerard Brown

Ernest R. Dickerson

Story

Ernest R. Dickerson

Director of Photography

Larry Banks

Colour

Technicolor

Camera Operators

Phil Otkier

Additional:

Michael Barry

Video Operator

Joseph Trammell

Graphic Artist

Edward Ioffreda

Editors

Sam Pollard

Brunilda Torres

Production Designer

Lester Cohen

Art Department

Co-ordinator

Jennifer Meisle

Set Decorator

Alyssa Winter

Set Dressers

Joel Barkow

Elizabeth DeLuna

Mitch Towse

Keith Wall

Draughtspersons

Diann Duthie

Daniel Talpers

Special Effects

Edward Drohan III

Edward Drohan IV

Music

Hank Shocklee

Keith Shocklee

Carl Ryder

Gary G. Wiz

Music Supervisor

Kathy Nelson

Music Editor

James Flatto

Songs

"Uptown

Anthem" performed

by Naughty by Nature;

"Juice (Know the

Ledge)" by William

Griffin, performed by

Eric B. & Rakim; "Is It

Good to You" by and

performed by Teddy

Riley, Tammy Lucas;

"S M & M" by Pooh-

man, performed

by M. C. Pooh; "Nuff"

Respect" by Big Daddy

Kane, Hank Shocklee,

Gary G-Wiz, Al-Dee,

performed by Big

Daddy Kane; "So You

Want to Be a Gangster"

by and performed by

Too Short; "It's Going

Down" by Erik Sermon,

Parrish Smith,

performed by EPMD;

"Don't Be Afraid"

by Aaron Hall, Hank

Shocklee, Gary G-Wiz,

Floyd F. Fisher,

performed by Aaron

Hall; "He's Gamin' on

Ya" performed by Salt

N' Pepa; "Shoot 'Em

Up" performed by

Cypress Hill Crew;

"Flip Side" by Ricky

Taylor, performed by

Juvenile Committee;

"What Could Be Better

Bitch" by T. Allan,

Hank Shocklee,

G. G-Wiz, performed

by Son of Berzerk;

"Does Your Man Know

About Me" performed

by Rahiem; "People

Get Ready (Remix)"

by J. Kincaid, A. Levy,

S. Bartholomew,

L. Gordon, J. William,

N. Davenport,

performed by The

Brand New Heavies,

N' Dea Davenport;

"Wood Up" performed

by Cameo; "Pump Me

Up", "Bodega Juice"

performed by Bobby

Torres; "Ooh Aah"

performed by Fabulous

Five; "How I Could Just

Kill a Man" performed

by Cypress Hill Crew

Costume Design

Donna Berwick

Wardrobe Supervisors

Jennifer Ruscoe

Jane E. Myers

Make-up Artists

Matiki Anoff

Additional:

Joseph Cuervo

Titles

Greenberg & Schluter

Opticals

Balsmeyer & Everett

Supervising Sound Editor

Wendy Hedin

Sound Editors

Ray Karpicki

Boriau Picard

Frederick Jacobi

ADR Editors

Bitty O'Sullivan-Smith

Lisa Levine

Harriet Fildow

Sound Recordists

Franklin D. Stettner

ADR/Foley:

Michael Ceroni

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Rick Dior

ADR/Foley:

Paul Zydel

Sound Effects Editor

Wendy Hedin

Foley Artists

Linda Russo

Nancy Linden Cabrera

DJ Consultants

Plaz-tic Man

Rich E. Rich

Production Assistant

Location:

Ron M. Haynes

Stunt Co-ordinator

Jeff Ward

Stunts

Bill Anagnos

David Lomax

Jerry Hewitt

Michael C. Russo

Chuck Jeffreys

Greg Smiz

Norman Douglass

John Patrick

McLaughlin

Millicent Terraine

Cast

Omar Epps

Snappy Nappy Dugout

Mitchell Marchand

Kid at Trips

Corwin Moore

Sam

Lauren Jones

Raheem's Mother

Birdie M. Hale

Bishop's Grandma

L. B. Williams

Bishop's Father

Donald Faison

Student

Eddie Joe

Bartender

John Patrick McLaughlin

Norman Douglass

John DiBenedetto

Cops

Christopher Rubin

Doctor

Juanita Troy-Keitt

Homeless Woman

Ed Lover

Dr Dre

Contest Judges

Fab 5 Freddie

Himself

EPMD

Erik Sermon

Parrish Smith

Bar Patrons

Tretch

K. Force

Special Ed

DJ Scratch

Kid Capri

Rich E. Rich

Plaz-tic Man

Bones Malone

Ralph McDaniel

DJ Red Alert

Ed Lovett

Knight Moves

USA/Germany 1992

Director: Carl Schenkel

Certificate

18
Distributor
 Columbia TriStar
Production Companies
 Knight Moves
 Productions
 (Los Angeles)/Cine Vox
 Filmproduktion (Munich)
Executive Producers
 Christopher Lambert
 Brad Mirman
Producers
 Ziad El Khoury
 Jean-Luc Defailt
Co-producer
 Dieter Geissler
Line Producer
 Gordon Mark
Co-production Associate
 Graham Ludlow
Production Office
Co-ordinator
 Heather Boyd
Production Manager
 Gordon Mark
Location Manager
 John Penhall
Post-production
Co-ordinators
 Raoul Leindecker
 Chris Jahn
Casting
 Canada:
 Michelle Allen
 Extras:
 Annette McCaffrey
 Warner
Assistant Directors
 T. W. Peacocke
 Jack Hardy
 Jackie Gould
Screenplay
 Brad Mirman
Director of Photography
 Dietrich Lohmann
Colour
 Eastman Colour
Camera Operators
 Paul F. Birkett
 "B" Camera:
 John Clothier
Steadicam Operator
 John Clothier
Video Operator
 Klaus Melchior
Video Display
 Video Image
Editor
 Norbert Herzner
Production Designer
 Graeme Murray
Art Director
 Gary Pembroke Allen
Set Decorator
 Michael O'Connor
Set Dressers
 Patrick Kearns
 Clive Edwards
Draughtsperson
 Ken Rabehl
Storyboard Artist
 Chris Bartleman
Special Effects
Co-ordinator
 Gary Paller
Music Performed by
 Pro Arte Orchestra
 of London
Orchestrations/
Synthesizer/Programming
 Anne Dudley
Songs
 "Fool that I Am" by Hunt;
 "I Put a Spell on You" by
 Hawkins, Slotkin,
 performed by Carol
 Renyon
Costume Designers
 Deborah Evertson
 Associate:
 Trish Keating
Wardrobe Supervisor
 Debbie Geaghan
Costumer
 Tish Monaghan
Make-up Artist
 Margaret M. Solomon
Title Design
 DDZ Communication
Titles
 Jean-Marc Haddad
Titles/Opticals
 Bavaria Kopierwerk

Sound Editors

André Bendocchi-Alves
Dialogue:
 Solweig Bore
Sound Recordists
 Ralph Parker
Music:
 Roger Dudley
 Foley: Eckardt Goebel
 ADR: Vince Renaud
 Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recorder
 Michael Kranz
Foley Artists
 Mel Kutbay
 Joern Poetzl
Chess Adviser
 Marty Kolt
Production Assistant
 James Tichenor
Stunt Co-ordinator
 Bill Ferguson
Stunts
 Scott Ateah
 Bill Ferguson
 Melissa Stubbs
 Gerald Paetz
Stand-ins
 Victor Magnusson
 Chris Turner
 Melissa Conroy
 Derek Peakman
Cast
 Christopher Lambert
 Peter Sanderson
 Diane Lane
 Kathy Sheppard
 Tom Skerritt
 Frank Sedman
 Daniel Baldwin
 Andy Wagner
 Ferdinand Mayne
 Jeremy Edmonds
 Katherine Isobel
 Erica Sanderson
 Charles Bailey-Gates
 David Willerman
 Arthur Strauss
 Viktor Yurilovich
 Codie Lucas Wilbee
 David, age 9
 Josh Murray
 Peter, age 14
 Frank C. Turner
 Doctor
 Don Thompson
 Father
 Megan Leitch
 Mother
 Alex Diakun
 Grandmaster Lutz
 Mark Wilson
 Newscaster
 Rehl O'Byrne
 Debi Rutledge
 Bia Mankuma
 Steve Nolan
 Monica Marko
 Miss Greenwell
 Walter Marsh
 Chess President
 Suzy Carby
 Desk Clerk
 Sam Malkin
 Doctor Fulton
 Elizabeth Baldwin
 Christie Eastman
 Dwight McFee
 Technician
 Pat Bernier
 Holly Chester
 Officers
 Elizabeth Barclay
 Lorraine Olson
 Rebecca Toolan
 Mayor
 Aundrea MacDonald
 Mary Albert
 Freda Perry
 Attractive Girl
 Marilyn Norry
 Homeseacher
 Donna Yamamoto
 Reporter
 Tom Heaton
 Detective
 Rachel Hayward
 Last Victim
 Kimberly Sheppard
 Detective Janet McLellan
 Deryl Hayes
 Officer Harton

10,471 feet
 116 minutes

1972: During a junior chess championship, a defeated competitor stabs his opponent with a pencil. The boy is referred to a child psychiatrist, his father leaves home and his alcoholic mother kills herself. Twenty years later: Having forfeited a major championship three years before, chess player Peter Sanderson makes his comeback at a world-class tournament held on a small North-West Pacific island. His blind coach, Jeremy Edmonds, warns him that he is in danger of alienating his young daughter Erica, as he did his now dead wife. A woman, Debi Rutledge, with whom Sanderson has sex, is then found murdered, her face grotesquely made up and the word 'Remember' scrawled in blood on the wall.

Questioned by Chief of Police Frank Sedman and detective Andy Wagner, Sanderson initially denies having been with the victim. But when a mystery phone caller challenges him to a game, and sends him a polaroid of the murdered woman, Sanderson contacts the police. Psychologist Kathy Sheppard is called in to construct a personality profile of the killer. Two more murders occur: the words 'Eventually' and 'Revenge' are written in blood. A fault on Sanderson's chess computer is fixed by local electronics expert David Willerman. The police set up a phone tap in Sanderson's basement, to monitor the killer's calls. But after she and Sanderson make love, Kathy is alarmed to find the victims' names ringed in his phone book. He reassures her; a fourth murder then yields the word clue 'Is'.

Plotting the killer's chess-like moves on a map, the police anticipate his next murder. However, soon after a faulty electronic display board forces Sanderson to abandon a game against his arch rival, Viktor Yurilovich, another woman is killed elsewhere: the word clue is 'Carefully'. Sanderson tells Kathy that his wife's death three years before caused him to shut down emotionally; he then opens a note left by her which proves, as he feared, to be a suicide note. But Kathy suspects him again when he reveals that he already knew the last clue word. After she is attacked by a masked figure, and Jeremy Edmonds is found dead - with

evidence indicating that he and Sanderson were accomplices - Sanderson is arrested.

Kathy then finds that a chess-book reference Sanderson claims to have used to deduce the last clue checks out. Meanwhile, Sanderson deciphers the word clues: Remember, Eric. Realising that his daughter Erica is in danger, he escapes from the police. At his apartment he finds detective Wagner with his throat cut. During a taunting phone call from the killer, Sanderson recognises a background sound as the water pump in the flooded basement where the phone tap is set up. Kathy and Sedman are embroiled in the ensuing struggle, during which Erica is saved and David Willerman - after revealing himself to be the boy who attacked the young Sanderson with a pencil - is shot dead by him.

Despite an absurdly convoluted plot predicated on the idea that the hero (Christopher Lambert) might be a serial killer, this over-heated and over-stylised thriller is devoid of any real suspense. The unlikelihood that the leading man could be the callous and calculating killer of five young women is rendered doubly unthinkable by the fact that Lambert and his real-life wife Diane Lane were involved in this American-German co-production from an early stage, making it virtually a vanity project.

This crippling structural fault aside, Brad Mirman's original screenplay is well constructed, with some neat touches: for example, the reference to Anton Berger's book on how to play chess, which allows Sanderson to deduce the next word clue from the Grandmaster's advice to play "Carefully, carefully and carefully". Carl Schenkel, who directed the tense 1984 'lift' drama *Out of Order*, seems determined to distract us from the film's essential implausibility by blinding us with flashy camerawork and needlessly elaborate visual design. Ultimately, the efforts of the expressionless Lambert and all concerned are rendered risible by a finale in which the barely glimpsed murderer pops up to resolve the would-be ambiguities.

Nigel Floyd



Indefensible: Christopher Lambert

Lunes de fiel (Bitter Moon)

France/United Kingdom 1992

Director: Roman Polanski

Certificate

18
Distributor
 Columbia TriStar
Production Companies
 R. P. Productions
 (Paris)/Timothy Burrill
 Productions (London)
 With the participation
 of Les Films Alain
 Sarde/Canal +
Executive Producer
 Robert Benmussa
Producer
 Roman Polanski
Co-producer
 Alain Sarde
Production Supervisor
 Daniel Szuster
Production Manager
 Jean-Jacques Damiani
Unit Manager
 Jean-Marc Abbou
Location Manager
 Bruno Vignier
Post-production Manager
 Françoise Piraud
Casting
 US:
 Bonnie Timmerman
 UK:
 Mary Selway
 France:
 Françoise Menidrey
 Extras:
 Alberte Garo
Assistant Directors
 Michel Cheyko
 Eric Bartonio
 Patrick Boshart
 Emmanuel Booz
 Anne Trinquelle
Screenplay
 Roman Polanski
 Gérard Brach
 John Brownjohn
Screenplay Collaborator
 Jeff Gross
 Based on the novel by
 Pascal Bruckner
Director of Photography
 Tonino Delli Colli
 In colour
Camera Operator
 Jean Harnois
Steadicam Operator
 Nicola Pecorini
Optical Effects Supervisor
 Frederic Moreau
Editor
 Hervé de Luze
Associate Editor
 Glenn Cunningham
Production Designers
 Willy Holt
 Gérard Viard
Set Dressers
 Philippe Turlure
 Jean-Claude Perchet
Special Effects
 Jean-Louis Trinquier
 Jean-François Cousson
 Benoît Lestang
 Pierre Foury
 Martin Gutteridge
 Paul Wilson
Music
 Vangelis
Music Performed by
 Vangelis
 Vocals:
 Sapho
Songs
 "Fever" by John
 Davenport, Eddie
 Cooley, performed
 by Peggy Lee"; "Katia
 Flavia A Godiva Do
 Iraja" by Fausto
 Fawcett, Carlos Leuter,
 performed by Fausto
 Fawcett, Roboa
 Efemeros; "La Mer"
 by Charles Trenet;
 "Faith" by and
 performed by George
 Michael; "Stop" by
 Bruce Brody, Samantha
 Brown, Gregg Sutton,
 performed by Sam
 Brown; "Sweet Dreams
 (Are Made of This)" by
 Dave A. Stewart, Annie
 Lennox, performed by
 Eurythmics; "Denise et
 Irene" by Louis Blach;
 "I Will Survive" by
 Dino Fekarie, Freddie
 Perren, performed by
 Gloria Gaynor; "Slave
 to Love" by Bryan
 Ferry, "My Cherie
 Amour" by Stevie
 Wonder, H. Cosby,
 Sylvia Moy, "Hello"
 by Lionel Richie,
 "Never Can Say
 Goodbye" by Clifton
 Davis, "Frangosyriani
 Kyra" by Markos
 Vamvakaria, performed
 by Danny Garcy
Choreography
 Redha
Costume Design
 Jackie Budin
Wardrobe
 Anne Dunsford-
 Varenne
Make-up Artists
 Didier Lavergne
 Sophie Harvey
Titles/Opticals
 Microfilms Magic
 Camera Company
Sound Editors
 Laurent Quaglio
 Roberto Garzelli
 Dialogue:
 Anne-Marie Leduc
 Mimi Dashedski
ADR Editor
 Lizabeth Gelber
Sound Recordists
 Daniel Brisseau
 Bill Rowe
 Ray Merrin
 Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recorder
 Jacques Levy
 Marion Lorthioir
 Jean-François Auger
Foley
 Jean-Pierre Lelong
 Mario Melchiorri
Stunt Co-ordinator
 Jean-Louis Airola
Stand-ins
 Natalia Sevenants
 Philippe Guiraud
Cast
 Hugh Grant
 Nigel Dobson
Kristin Scott-Thomas
 Fiona Dobson
Emmanuelle Seigner
 Mimi
Peter Coyote
 Oscar
Victor Bannerjee
 Mr Singh
Sophie Patel
 Amrita
Stockard Channing
 Beverly
Patrick Albenque
 Steward
Smitja Mihailovitch
Leo Eckmann
 Bridge Players
Luca Vellani
 Dado
Richard Dieux
 Partygoer
Danny Garcy
 Bandleader
Daniel Dhupert
 Bus Inspector

Nathalie Galan
Girl in Boutique
Eric Gonzales
Cook
Jim-Adhi Limas
Thai MD
Boris Bergman
Oscar's Friend
Olivia Brunaux
Cindy
Heaven Grant
Basil
Charlene
Hooker
Geoffrey Carey
Neighbour with Dog

Robert Benmussa
Flight Dispatcher
Claire Lopez
Model
Shannon Finnegan
Housewife
Frédérique Lopez
Brunette
Yse Marguerite Tran
Eurasian Girl
Claude Bonnet
Mayor

12,511 feet
139 minutes

English version

Nigel Dobson, a British Eurobond dealer, and Fiona, his wife of seven years, are sailing to Istanbul en route for India. They encounter a beautiful French woman, Mimi, and that night Nigel meets her again, as she dances alone in the ship's bar; later, her crippled American husband, Oscar, takes Nigel to his cabin and begins to tell him their story... After living in Paris for several years, trying to be a writer, he becomes obsessed by a young woman with whom he has a chance encounter on a bus. Tracking her down, he finds her working as a waitress (though her ambition is to be a dancer); they begin a rapturous love affair, and soon Oscar is "enslaved body and soul"...

Next day, Oscar joins Hugh and Fiona at lunch and borrows Nigel to continue his narrative... Over time, his relationship with Mimi had dulled, needing to be spiced up with doses of perversity and sado-masochism, and was further distorted by jealousy... Later that day, Mimi insists on talking to Nigel, who is tricked into betraying his growing attraction to her. Oscar tells of a dinner with a New York literary editor, Beverly, being sabotaged by the jealous Mimi. During a violent argument he throws her to the floor and concusses her. Chastened, he takes her back to the funfair of their early love, but then throws her out. After a night drinking in a bar, he finds her lying outside his flat. He takes her back but treats her with calculated callousness; when she tells him that she is pregnant, he talks her into an abortion, and then tricks her into flying off alone to Martinique...

Nigel's increasingly long absences and evident fascination with the story of Oscar and Mimi provoke Fiona into bitter recriminations about their marriage and her childlessness. Oscar continues his story... Two years pass and Mimi becomes a distant memory. He stops pretending to be a writer, concentrating on his hedonistic night life. Then, early one morning, he is knocked down by a car and breaks his leg. The only person to visit him in hospital is - Mimi. She pushes him out of bed, causing injuries that paralyse him from the waist down. After this, she becomes his taunting, sadistic nurse. For his birthday, she gives him a gun. Then she marries him; they are "survivors of a catastrophe"...

New Year is celebrated with a party on board ship. Nigel dances with Mimi and confesses he has fallen in love with her. She replies, "I'm just a fantasy, it's just a game". Later Mimi dances alone; Fiona joins her and they kiss. A violent storm breaks up the party and Nigel retires alone to the deck. Then, looking for Fiona, he returns to Mimi's cabin, where Oscar is watching the "two nymphs" lying together in bed. Nigel tries to strangle Oscar; Oscar shoots Mimi and then himself.

In Roman Polanski's first feature, *Knife in the Water*, a middle-aged couple pick up a young hitch-hiker and take him on their sailing trip, during which the husband involves him in an increasingly sinister power game. In Ian McEwan's novella, *The Comfort of Strangers*, filmed by Paul Schrader, a young English couple in Venice are drawn into the corrupt web of an Italian and his crippled Canadian wife. In *Bitter Moon*, Polanski seems to blend these two prototypes (the actual source is a novel by Pascal Bruckner), but somehow manages to jettison both the meticulous detail and emotional precision of *Knife in the Water* and the cool rigour and taut prose of McEwan.

The clash between its two couples, between the prim propriety of the English and the reckless blatancy of the Parisians, is central to the meaning of *Bitter Moon*. But the film fundamentally miscalculates which couple's story

might be the more interesting, and grossly overestimates the audience's fascination with Oscar and Mimi's *danse macabre*. After a promising start, Oscar's story soon lapses into a succession of flaccid clichés, from Notre Dame by night to rides at the funfair, to bars and girls and whisky and the lower depths. The relentless vapidity of his first-person narration ("the rapture of that first awakening", "our mad love was a sacrament") makes it amply clear why Oscar has failed to emulate his mentors Hemingway, Miller and Scott Fitzgerald, and Beverly the literary editor is surely right that Paris, this Paris, is "vieux jeu".

The script of *Bitter Moon* is a lazy male fantasy in which a beautiful, compliant young woman (Emmanuelle Seigner, again cast by Polanski, as she was in *Frantic*, as a wild girl getting involved with an American in Paris) remains besotted with a middle-aged man no matter how badly he treats her. It is shot through with a nasty, prurient misogyny, which first subjects her to any number of cruel humiliations and then presents her intricate revenge as merely a variation of emotional thralldom, requiring us to believe that Mimi will trade working as a dancer in Martinique for a place between the handles of Oscar's wheelchair. In one of the film's few genuinely powerful scenes, Mimi, her sculpted black dress and lustrous hair recalling another icon of decadence, Anita Ekberg in *La Dolce Vita*, is joined on the dance floor by Fiona in sardonically complicitous rebellion against masculine inadequacy. But her escape is short-lived, and the script's final misogynistic trump is for Oscar to choose the timing of her death.

Potentially much more interesting is the film's Forsterian strain, the English journey abroad in search of emotional awakening. Both Oscar and Mimi suggest on occasion (though these hints of parodic intent seem a lamely self-defensive device on the writers' part) that their story may not be true, that it may be a fantasy designed to trigger a response in Nigel and Fiona. Hugh Grant gives a finely nuanced performance as dull, decent Nigel, repeatedly at a loss for words, a hilariously clumsy dancer, powerless in the face of emotional aggression, and Kristin Scott-Thomas (who, like Grant, has played this kind of part before) brings a haunting sadness to brittle, frustrated Fiona.

Their parts are underwritten, however, and their emotional turmoil disdained, though it is through their encounters with the dignified widower Mr Singh (Victor Bannerjee) and his grave and quiet daughter that the film finds its fragile moments of insight. Asked by Mr Singh why they are going to Bombay, Nigel suggests that "India's got so much to teach the West. Inner serenity, that kind of stuff...". Mr Singh replies that India is the noisiest place on earth. At the film's close, the couple stand huddled together on deck, their Passage to India no longer necessary.

Julian Graffy

Secret Friends

United Kingdom 1991

Director: Dennis Potter

Certificate
15
Distributor
Feature Film Co
Production Company
Film Four
International
A Whistling Gypsy
production
Executive Producers
Robert Michael Geisler
John Roberdeau
Producer
Rosemarie Whitman
Associate Producer
Alison Barnett
Production Co-ordinator
Vivien Jordan
Location Manager
David Kennaway
Casting
Kathleen Mackie
Assistant Directors
Edward Brett
Jerry Daly
Andy Kelk
Screenplay
Dennis Potter
Based on his novel
Ticket to Ride
Director of Photography
Sue Gibson
In colour
Camera Operator
Ian Foster
Editor
Clare Douglas
Production Designer
Gary Williamson
Art Director
Sarah Horton
Wild Flower Paintings
Jane Potter
Special Effects
Effects Associates
Music
Nick Russell-Pavier
Music Performed by
Saxophone:
Greg Heath
Violin:
Jo Martin
Drums:
Paul Clarris
Clarinet:
Mark Allaway
Guitar/Banjo:
Colin Ryan
Bass:
David Swift

Trumpet/
Violin Arrangements
Steve Bentley
Music Producer
David Chilton
Costume Design
Sharon Lewis
Wardrobe
Lynn Horrie
Make-up Artist
Ann McEwan
Titles
Peter Watson
Associates
Sound Editor
Andrew Glen
Sound Recordists
John Midgley
Music:
Andre Jacquemin
Recording
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recorder
Hugh Strain
Technical Co-ordinator
Charles D. Staffel
Stand-ins
Alan Bates:
Bill Burns
Gina Bellman:
Mercedes Burleigh

Cast
Alan Bates
John
Gina Bellman
Helen
Frances Barber
Angela
Tony Doyle
Martin
Joanna David
Kate
Colin Jeavons
Vicar
Rowena Cooper
Mother
Ian McNeice
David Harries
Businessmen
Niven Boyd
BR Steward/Patient
Martin Whiting
Young John
Roy Hamilton
Singer
Nicholas Russell-Pavier
Colin Ryan
David Swift
Musicians

8,771 feet
97 minutes

Travelling on an Inter-City train, John, an illustrator of wild flowers, is haunted by homicidal visions of his wife Helen and memories of his repressive upbringing by his botanist vicar father in the vicarage where he still lives with Helen. John remembers his nervous outburst when Helen interrupted him at work and remembers, or imagines, meeting Helen as a call girl in a London hotel. Meanwhile, looking through John's files, Helen finds a card on which he has scrawled "KILL HER".

On the train, John has forgotten his identity and attempts to find clues as to who he is with the help of two businessmen seated opposite him. The same two men also appear in the hotel bar where John is having a drink with Helen. John sees himself in London, approached by a prostitute who is first his neighbour Angela - with whom Helen suspects he has had an affair - then Helen. At a dinner party



Icon recall: Emmanuelle Seigner

with Angela, and their friends, Martin, an estate agent, and Kate, the discussion turns to the imaginary 'secret friends' they had as children, while John's own double seems to lurk outside the house.

On the train, John checks his wallet and finds it inexplicably full of money. Martin telephones the vicarage and surprises Helen with the news that John is selling the house. Distraught, Helen is visited by Angela who tells her that she and John have been acting out a fantasy about her being a prostitute, but that now John has started to believe it. Helen strangles Angela. Martin visits her, and Helen first seduces him and then stabs him with a garden trowel. After a nightmare vision of being in a mental ward, John wakes up with Helen and confesses that he has had an affair with Angela, then tells her about his dreams of her murdering Angela and Martin. On the train with Helen, John declares his intention to continue with his mental journey.

Dennis Potter's dramatic obsessions have always thrived on the force of repetition, but his recent work has suggested a psychological barrel scraped dry. After recycling his TV play *Schmoedipus* for Nic Roeg's *Track 29* and his novel *Blackeyes* for television, Potter has now reworked his novel *Ticket to Ride* to make *Secret Friends*. Overlaps with the rest of his oeuvre are legion. There is the fantasy double (Alan Bates lurks in a fedora like Michael Gambon in *The Singing Detective*) and the repressive rural childhood with a sanctimonious vicar risibly hissing, "I will be up later to admonish you." That Potter staple, the jaunty 30s-style song, which accompanies much of the action, comes across as a mere *auteur* tic.

The casting of Gina Bellman suggests parallels with *Blackeyes* where she played the rebellious creation of a would-be Pygmalion. Here, Helen is both John's real wife and his fantasy, and the narrative plays on the ways in which she evades his manipulation. She is at once autonomous, revenging herself for John's real and imagined abuses of her, and manipulated in that her autonomy itself turns out to be a

fantasy, a masochistic stick with which John beats himself as he projects his murderous desire on to her. As in *Blackeyes*, Potter portrays the author figure as a callously onanistic manipulator of the female image – the classically double-edged *mea culpa* of a male artist castigating and indulging his misogyny.

The device of the train journey as a voyage of self-exploration is established in the opening shot – repeated at the end – of John and Helen on the train, sifting through his illustrations. In the narrative, John sifts through his pack of mental images *en route* for catharsis, in the shape of Helen's climactic killings. But the overlap of different levels of narration – bound together by similarly overlapping sound effects – fails to make any interesting pattern of John's imaginings. All events, real or imagined, seem to take place in an eternal present, time being collapsed most dramatically when John, at once a boy and a man, watches his parents dancing in the attic (virtually a parody of a Potter primal scene).

The supposedly cathartic conclusion, in which we return to some sort of real present on the train, resolves nothing, because we have never been drawn into the game of trying to work out what really happens. All the layers of narrative appear to coexist, yet if the story is to be taken as a psychological jigsaw, the 'real' needs to be located more decisively as a vantage point from which to scan the overall pattern.

All these fantasy mechanisms working themselves out once again add up to self-pastiche on Potter's part (rather than self-parody, which would suggest something more knowing and dynamic). Perhaps most damaging, Potter loses our sympathy from the start by his indulgent direction of the actors. Alan Bates' excessive leering and Bellman's limited repertoire of ingénue mannerisms push the melodrama into farce from the outset. The result is an inert rehearsal of old tropes whose therapeutic power has been dulled by repetition. It is time that Potter pulled the communication cord on this particular train of thought.

Jonathan Romney



Retracking: Gina Bellman, Alan Bates

Straight Out of Brooklyn

USA 1991

Director: Matty Rich

Certificate

15

Distributor

Artificial Eye

Production Company

Blacks N' Progress

In association with American Playhouse

With financial assistance from The Public Broadcasting Service/The Corporation for Public Broadcasting/The National Endowment for the Arts/The Chubb Group of Insurance Companies

Executive Producers

Lindsay Law

Ira Deutchman

Producer

Matty Rich

Associate Producer

Allen Black

Production Associate

Elizabeth Manne

Casting

Dorise Black

Screenplay

Matty Rich

Director of Photography

John Rosnell

In colour

Editor

Jack Haigis

Art Director

Walter Meade

Music

Harold Wheeler

Music Supervisor

Arthur Baker

Music Editor

Jack Haigis

Songs

"Are You Really Real?" by Triso Pearson, Travis Milner, Harold Lee, "Sweet Dreams" by Robin Halpin, Antoine Lundy, performed by Force M.D.'s; "Come Again" by Errol O'Meally, Carl Estick, performed by J. C. Lodge; "In Time of Need" by and performed by Harold Wheeler; "Take Some Time Out" by Harold Wheeler, performed by Shirley Matthews; "Straight Out of Brooklyn (Hip-Hop)" by Daddy-O, M. C. Watchout, Rob N' The Rich, King Shabbaz, performed by The East New York Connection; "A Woman Is a Confusin' Thang" by Matty Rich, Harold Wheeler, performed by Ken Williams; "Get Into It" by Arthur Baker, Eric Beal; "The Pros" by Dana Owens, G. Bolton, performed by Queen Latifah, Daddy-O

Make-up Artists

Taina Traverso

Hildie Fieremans

Supervising Sound Editor

Kevin Lee

Sound Editor

Thomas A. Gulino

ADR Editor

Pam Demetrius

Sound Recordists

Donna Farnum

William Kozy

ADR:

David Boulton

Foley:

George A. Lara

Sound Re-recordist

Mel Zelniker

Foley Artists

Elisha Birnbaum

Brian Vancho

Production Assistants

Paul Eliacin

Lori Hankinson

Heather Nicholson

Susan Stuart

Cast

George T. Odum

Ray Brown

Ann D. Sanders

Frankie Brown

Lawrence Gilliard Jr

Dennis Brown

Barbara Sanon

Carolyn Brown

Reana E. Drummond

Shirley

Matty Rich

Larry Love

Mark Malone

Kevin

Ali Shahid Abdul Wahha

Luther

Joseph A. Thomas

Saladene

James McFadden

James

Dorise Black

Ms Walker

Robert N. Nash

Skeet

Fran Sperling

Sarah

Billy R.

Gas Station Customer

Joseph Pillonia

Gas Station Manager

Booker T. Matthews

Uncle Scotty

J. R. Hill

Bartender

Walter Meade

Man in Grocery Store

Soraya Hyppolite

Woman in Grocery Store

Krystal Davis

Luther's Girlfriend

David Belgrave

Grocery Clerk

Albertha Moody

Secretary in Employment Office

William Erskine

James Mayes

Men in Bar

Ulysses Rivers

Voice-Over

7,447 feet

83 minutes



Lawrence Gilliard Jr, Reana E. Drummond

Brooklyn. Dennis Brown, who shares a bedroom with his sister Carolyn, listens as his drunken father Ray smashes the apartment and beats up his wife, Frankie, out of frustration with his poverty and the family's lack of opportunity. Next day, an angry Dennis and his sister clean up the mess. Their badly bruised mother goes to the labour exchange for her cleaning work. In the diner where his girlfriend, Shirley, works, Dennis meets his friends Larry and Kevin, and suggests that they do something serious about their impoverished circumstances and bleak prospects.

After watching his friends' pointless row with another black man, Dennis suggests they pull a robbery. Larry reluctantly agrees, and he and Kevin set about obtaining a car and a gun. Watching the Manhattan skyline with Shirley, Dennis promises her that he will get there, but not by going to college. They later make love at Shirley's house, and she warns him about doing anything crooked. When Dennis returns home late, his father – who believes he wasn't home for dinner because he is ashamed – is waiting, drunk and angry.

Dennis and his friends go to collect the gun from a friend of Kevin's. In the street, Dennis meets his father, who talks about his parents' hard life and how he had wanted to be a doctor. The local gangsters meanwhile meet to discuss the pick-up of a large amount of money. Frankie is refused work at the labour exchange because her battered appearance offends clients. At home, Ray is feeling better and dancing to the blues. When Frankie returns, they dance together; Ray is remorseful at seeing her bruised face, and she asks him to stop drinking. That evening, he beats her again.

Dennis tells Shirley about the robbery and she breaks off with him. The next day, the three friends snatch the money from the gangsters. The others are afraid of the consequences, but Dennis convinces them to keep it. Dennis tries to give his parents the money, and a row ensues in which Frankie falls and hurts herself. In hospital, she dies in front of a distraught Dennis and his sister. After leaving the hospital, their father is killed by the gangsters.

Matty Rich began *Straight Out of Brooklyn*, his directorial debut, at the age of seventeen; now nineteen, he has won the Special Jury prize at last year's Sundance Film Festival. Shot ▶



In the raw: Lawrence Gilliard Jr, Mark Malone, Matty Rich

◀ on location in Brooklyn's Red Hook housing projects, where Rich lived, the film has been heralded as a raw, honest and provocative account of ghetto life. It is definitely raw, in its gauche handling of a rather conventional plot, and honest in its intentions, but just how provocative is another matter. One of the paradoxes of this kind of realism is that it never seems able to achieve what a good documentary can. What is ostensibly a social film in fact becomes another painful reenactment of the family romance through the male line, so to speak.

The Brown father and son struggle for phallic power (money, jobs, sex) over the battered body of the mother and the undeveloped character of the sister. That Dennis should 'achieve' the death of his father – at the same moment that his mother dies – lends the film a cloying pessimism that breaks all the rules of realism and sets the film firmly in the realm of melodrama. Its relentless anger and bitterness (interestingly, feelings expressed by the father and son but not by the film's stalwart women) tells a more universal tale of male egotism and Oedipal struggle, with the contemporary social and racial setting more a backdrop than a set of issues to be explored.

The gangster sub-plot is awkwardly handled, and it is unclear whether Dennis even knows he is stealing gangland money. The scene between his father and mother as they dance to old-fashioned blues is touching and well played (particularly by George T. Odom), although neither is well served by the often heavy-handed dialogue. By and large, the quieter scenes are more adept – for example, when father and son achieve a partial reconciliation and we are allowed to see the similarities between them. Where Spike Lee works at the interface of black and white society, Rich belongs to the inward-gazing tendency and his film shows no political awareness at all. *Straight Out of Brooklyn* is not a glittering debut, but it does have a low-budget, first-time energy which sets it apart from much mainstream work.

Michael O'Pray

Strictly Ballroom

Australia 1992

Director: Baz Luhrmann

Certificate

PG

Distributor

Rank

Production Companies

M&A Film Corporation/Australian Film

Finance Corporation

Executive Producer

Antoinette Albert

Producer

Tristram Miall

Line Producer

Jane Scott

Production Co-ordinator

Rowena Talacko

Production Manager

Fiona McConaghy

Unit Manager

Justin Plummer

Casting

Faith Martin

Assistant Directors

Keith Heygate

P.J. Voeten

John Martin

Sue Andrews

Screenplay

Baz Luhrmann

Craig Pearce

Story

Baz Luhrmann

Andrew Bovell

Based on an original

idea by Baz Luhrmann

and on the N.I.D.A.

stage production

devised and developed

by the original cast,

and further developed

by the Six Years Old

Company

Director of Photography

Steve Mason

Colour

Eastman Colour

2nd Camera Operators

Ross Berryman

Andrew McLean

Steadicam Operators

Ian Jones

David Woodward

Opticals

Roger Cowland

Editor

Jill Bilcock

Production Designer

Catherine Martin

Associate Production Designer

Bill Marron

Art Director

Martin Brown

Art Department Co-ordinator

Julianne Mills

Set Dressers

Bill Marron

Rebecca Cohen

Justine Thompson

Draughtsmen

Michael Philips

Duncan Stemler

Scenic Artists

Steve Smith

Alan Craft

Lynn Rowland

Models

Michael Philips

Duncan Stemler

Music/Music Director

David Hirschfelder

Music Extracts

"Blue Danube Waltz"

by Johann Strauss Jr,

performed by The

Vienna Philharmonic;

"Etude Opus 10, No.3

in E Major" by Frédéric

Chopin; Overture from

"Carmen" by

Georges Bizet

Choral Music Performed by

Sydney Philharmonic

Choir

Additional Orchestrations

Ric Formosa

Songs

"Standing in the Rain",

"Yesterday's Hero",

"Love Is In the Air" by

Harry Vanda, George

Young, performed by

John Paul Young;

"Perhaps, Perhaps,

Perhaps (Quizas),

Quizas, Quizas)"

by Osvaldo Farres,

performed by Doris

Day; "Time After Time"

by Cyndi Lauper,

Hyman, performed

by Tara Morice, Mark

Williams; "La

Cumparista" by

Rodriguez Raver;

"Tequila" by Chuck

Rio; "Os Quindins de

Yaya" by Ary Barroso,

Ervin Drake,

performed by Stanley

Black and his Piano

Barroso; "España

Carne" by

Rodriguez Raver;

"Tequila" by Chuck

Rio; "Os Quindins de

Yaya" by Ary Barroso,

Ervin Drake,

performed by Stanley

Black and his Piano

Barroso; "España

Carne" by

Rodriguez Raver;

"Tequila" by Chuck

Rio; "Os Quindins de

Yaya" by Ary Barroso,

Ervin Drake,

performed by Stanley

Black and his Piano

Barroso; "España

Carne" by

Rodriguez Raver;

"Tequila" by Chuck

Rio; "Os Quindins de

Yaya" by Ary Barroso,

Ervin Drake,

performed by Stanley

Black and his Piano

Barroso; "España

Carne" by

Rodriguez Raver;

"Tequila" by Chuck

Rio; "Os Quindins de

Yaya" by Ary Barroso,

Ervin Drake,

performed by Stanley

Black and his Piano

Barroso; "España

Carne" by

Rodriguez Raver;

"Tequila" by Chuck

Rio; "Os Quindins de

Yaya" by Ary Barroso,

Ervin Drake,

performed by Stanley

Black and his Piano

Barroso; "España

Carne" by

Rodriguez Raver;

"Tequila" by Chuck

Rio; "Os Quindins de

Yaya" by Ary Barroso,

Ervin Drake,

performed by Stanley

Black and his Piano

Barroso; "España

Carne" by

Rodriguez Raver;

"Tequila" by Chuck

Rio; "Os Quindins de

Yaya" by Ary Barroso,

Ervin Drake,

performed by Stanley

Black and his Piano

Barroso; "España

Carne" by

Rodriguez Raver;

"Tequila" by Chuck

Rio; "Os Quindins de

Yaya" by Ary Barroso,

Ervin Drake,

performed by Stanley

Black and his Piano

Barroso; "España

Bill Hunter

Barry Fife

Pat Thomson

Shirley Hastings

Gia Carides

Liz Holt

Peter Whitford

Les Kendall

Barry Otto

Doug Hastings

John Hannan

Ken Railings

Sonia Kruger

Tina Sparkle

Kris McQuade

Charm Leachman

Pip Mushin

Wayne Burns

Leonie Page

Vanessa Cronin

Antonio Vargas

Rico

Armonia Benedito

Ya Ya

Jack Webster

Terry

Lauren Hewett

Kylie

Steve Grace

Luke

Paul Bertram

J.J. Silvers

Di Emery

Waitress

Lara Mulcahy

Natalie

Brian M. Logan

Clarry

Michael Burgess

Merv

Todd McKenney

Nathan Starkey

Kerry Shrimpton

Pam Short

Simone Gage

Bradley Sabott

Ray Mather

Jo Shinta

Peter Lynch

Lee Becchiet

Extras, Kendall's Studio

Warren Ring

Jaya Jamieson

John O'Connell

Try-out Coaches

Anita Curtis

Roxana Vella

Deanne Curtis

Try-out Girls

Angel Garcia

Toledo Guitarist

Dene Kermord

Genevieve White

Lisa Ellis

Jacqueline Lendich

Bob Adams

New Steps Family

8,456 feet

94 minutes

At the South District Ballroom Dancing Championship, young star dancer Scott Hastings impulsively starts dancing steps of his own devising. This alienates his partner, Liz, offends the all-powerful President of the Dance Federation, Barry Fife, and horrifies Scott's mother, Shirley, and his coach, Les Kendall, who together run the local dance studio. Disgraced and partnerless, Scott is approached by Fran, ugly duckling of the beginners class, who offers to partner him. Scott, though sceptical, is persuaded by her eagerness.

Over the next few weeks, they find themselves increasingly attuned, and Fran blossoms into new-found beauty. But at the State Championship, Scott is tempted by Les and Shirley's suggestion that he should partner champion dancer Tina Sparkle. Realising his error, Scott follows Fran home, where he is confronted by her Hispanic father Rico. Initially hostile, Rico is soon won round and along with Fran's grandmother tutors the young couple in Spanish dancing in preparation for the Pan-Pacific Grand Prix.

Shirley is appalled by Scott's plans, but Doug, his downtrodden father, is quietly supportive. To change Scott's mind, Barry Fife tells him how, at the 1967 Championships, the once-brilliant Doug had ruined Shirley's career by dancing his own steps. Crestfallen, Scott agrees to rejoin Liz and dance in the approved style. But at the last moment, Doug reveals the truth: Shirley, scared of Doug's innovations and persuaded by Barry, had dropped Doug in favour of the safe Les Kendall.

Together, Scott and Fran erupt on to the floor. Barry, furious, has the music stopped and orders them off. But the crowd, led by Doug, start clapping defiantly, and to the rhythm of the claps Scott and Fran complete a spectacular Spanish dance before falling into each other's arms. Wildly applauding, the whole audience takes to the dance floor in celebration.

Of all the popular dance forms, ballroom is the most rigidly, obsessively stylised. With its fixed narcissistic smiles, preposterous costumes and unashamedly glitzy vulgarity, ballroom works not despite its absurdities, but because of them – and exactly the same goes for Baz Luhrmann's film. In this context, it hardly matters that its plot is a compendium of narrative clichés, signalled well in advance, so that we wait in happy complicity for the moment when Fran takes off her glasses and metamorphoses into beauty, or when her dumpy old Spanish grandmother proves to be a past mistress of the *pasodoble*. Anything less would be a grave disappointment.

Strictly Ballroom

Thunderheart

USA 1992

Director: Michael Apted

Certificate

15

Distributor

Columbia TriStar
Production Companies
Tribeca/Waterhorse
For TriStar Pictures
Executive Producer
Michael Nozik

Producers

Robert De Niro
Jane Rosenthal
John Fusco

Production Office

Co-ordinator
Paula Benson-Hines

Unit Production Managers

Christopher Cronyn
Washington:
Jim Behnke

Location Managers

Antoine L. Douaihy
Washington:

2nd Unit Director

David Richard Ellis

Casting

Lisa Clarkson
Extras:

Jody Hummer

Assistant Directors

Chris Soldo
Jeff Okabayashi
George Bamber

2nd Unit:

Dennis Maguire

Screenplay

Bruce Ellison

Director of Photography

Roger Deakins

Colour

DuArt:

Prints by Technicolor

Camera Operators

Jonathan Herron
Spacecam:

Ron Goodman

Steadicam Operators

Ted Churchill
Randy Nolen
Paul Taylor

James Muro

Editor

Ian Crafford

Production Designer

Dan Bishop

Art Director

Bill Ballou

Art Department

Co-ordinator

Nelle Stokes

Set Decorator

Dianna Freas

Set Dressers

Wendell A. Hill II

Daniel J. Smiley

On set:

Jamie Bishop

Scenic Artist

Janet Kalas

Storyboard Artist

John F. Davis

Special Effects

Co-ordinator

John K. Stirber

Music

James Horner

Music Editor

Jim Henrikson

Songs

"Badlands" by and performed by Bruce Springsteen; "Gonna Take Time" by Ali Olmo; "Baby Let's Dance" by Ali Olmo; Germaine Franco, performed by Ali Olmo; "Feel Like Fooling Around" by Sonny Lemaire, Les Taylor, J. P. Pennington, performed by Exile

Costume Design

Susan Lyall

Wardrobe Supervisor

Elizabeth Feldbauer

Make-up Artists

Key: David Atherton

Titles/Opticals

Cinema Research Corporation

Supervising Sound Editor

Fred Brown

Supervising

Dialogue Editor

Lucy Coldsnow

Sound Editors

Michele Sharp

Stan Siegel

Dialogue:

Teri E. Dorman

Cindy Marty

Sound Recordists

Chris Newman

Music:

Shawn Murphy

ADR:

Jeff Gomillion

Foley:

Jackson Schwartz

Stage:

Matt Peterson

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Kevin O'Connell

Rick Kline

Foley Artists

Joseph Sabella

Robert Friedman

Lakota Language/

Ceremonial Adviser

Sonny Richards

Historical Consultants

Bruce Ellison

Candy Hamilton

Production Assistants

S. Fox Sloan

Richard Brodsky

Aimee Morris

James Apted

Kitty Duffy

Pablo Mozo

Alex Friedman

Joanie Livermont

Neal Livermont

Jeanne Morton

2nd Unit:

Franklin Adreon

Vallehe

Stunt Co-ordinator

Webster Whinery

Stunts

Michael Adams

Grant Brittan

Bill Burton

Bill Burton Jnr

Susan Rangitsch

Cronyn

Cliff Cudney

Loren F. Cuny

Marty Paul Cuny

Tim Davison

R. B. Dunn

Richard Ellis

Terrance E. Fredericks

Chris Hall

Randy Hall

Gene Hartline

Billy Lucas

Steve McAuliffe

Mark J. Nelson

Hugh Aodh O'Brien

Bernie Pock

Donald Pulford

Jeff Ramsey

Animal Trainer

Steve McAuliffe

Animal Wrangler

Mark Wiener

Helicopter Pilots

2nd Unit:

Craig Hoskings

Washington:

John Sarviss

Cast

Val Kilmer

Ray Levoi

Sam Shepard

Frank "Cooch" Coutelle

Graham Greene

Walter Crow Horse

Fred Ward

Jack Milton

Fred Dalton Thompson
William Dawes
Sheila Tousey
Maggie Eagle Bear
Chief Ted Thin Elk
Grandpa Sam Reaches
John Trudell
Jimmy Looks Twice
Julius Drum
Richard Yellow Hawk
Sarah Brave
Maisy Blue Legs
Allan R. J. Joseph
Leo Fast Elk
Sylvan Pumpkin Seed
Hobart
Patrick Massett
Agent Mackey
Rex Linn
Brian A. O'Meara
FBI Agents
Duane Brewer
Lewis C. Bradshaw
Rangers
Dennis Banks
Himself
Candy Hamilton
Schoolteacher
Jerome Mack
Maggie's Kid
Tom M. LeBeau
Ray's Father

Bridgit P. Schock
Ray's Mother
Terry Graber
Doctor
David Crosby
Bartender
Jerry Allan Hietala
Drunken Brawler
Gordon Patterson
Robin J. Saderup
Helicopter Pilots
Buddy Red Bow
Man at Powwow
Sam Adams
Robin Black Bird
Floyd Charging Crow
Elroy Cross
Charles Davis
Ernest Red Elk
Kenneth J. Richards
Severt Young Bear Snr
Lakota Singers
Carlin Orville Morrison
Verland Theodore Phelps
Calvin Timothy Red Elk Snr
Tim Owen Taggart
Melvin David Young Bear
Powwow Singers

10,725 feet
119 minutes

FBI agent Ray Levoi is ordered to a Sioux reservation in South Dakota to help Indian affairs veteran Frank "Cooch" Coutelle in a homicide investigation. Levoi is part Native American, and it is thought he may ease the dangerously tense relations in the Badlands. Ashamed of his Indian heritage, however, Levoi regards the case with distaste and takes a back seat as Cooch hunts down his primary suspect, Jimmy Looks Twice, a leader of the militant traditionalist group, ARM (Aboriginal Rights Movement). ARM are strongly opposed within the reservation by the pro-government tribal president Jack Milton and his GOONS (Guardians of the Oglala Nation).

Gradually, egged on by the tribal police officer Walter Crow Horse, Levoi begins to query Cooch's murder theory and his own instinctive antipathy for the traditionalists. He is impressed by the intelligence and conviction of Maggie Eagle Bear, an activist who returned from the East to put her education at the service of her tribe, and he is disturbed by the painfully prescient visions of the medicine man, Grandpa Sam Reaches. Levoi is questioning Maggie when a group of GOONS open fire on her house, leaving a little girl wounded. Later, when posted on a stakeout outside the medicine man's shack, he is almost hit by a federal-issue bullet.



Visit to the third world: Val Kilmer, Graham Greene

The murder victim's car is found dumped in the river, and Levoi finds a raffle ticket which he believes belonged to the murderer. He neglects to inform his superior, but asks Maggie to find who was given the ticket. She, however, is more concerned with the source of the poison in the water supply. Levoi has discovered his spiritual self, and envisages himself running from the soldiers at Wounded Knee. Cooch catches up with Jimmy Looks Twice and arrests him. Levoi interviews the owner of the raffle ticket, Richard Yellow Hawk, and discovers that he is an FBI informer, that he was the killer, but that Cooch set it up.

Levoi drives up to Red Deer Table with Walter Crow Horse to fulfil the medicine man's prophecy. There is evidence that the government has drilled for uranium and contaminated the river. Backed by Cooch, Milton has sold out the reservation. They find Maggie, dead, and return to see Yellow Hawk, who is also dead. Chased by Cooch and the GOONS, Levoi and Walter finally confront their pursuers and the tribe rallies behind Levoi.

The title suggests a Western, as does the track record of screenwriter John Young Guns Fusco. In fact, it is only a Western in the geographical sense, for while *Thunderheart* is concerned primarily with Indians, or Native Americans if you will, it adopts that classical detective story framework in which an investigation into an apparently straightforward crime takes on unexpectedly broad ramifications.

The film begins with a traditional Sioux ritual, The Ghost Dance, against the barren expanse of the South Dakota Badlands, then cuts abruptly to a traffic jam on the Washington DC freeway. A young FBI agent reports for his orders, apparently flush from a successful undercover operation, although Ray Levoi looks every inch a bureau man (you wonder idly if his middle name might be 'Ban'). At any rate his next assignment requires no cover: "You're going in as who you are", his superior blandly informs him. Just who that is - and how he can reconcile his part-Sioux heritage with the modern American citizen he believes himself to be - is the subject of this dry, engrossing mystery.

The opening sequence apart, the action takes place entirely within the Sioux reservation, "the third world slap in the middle of America". Levoi's response to the poverty he sees around him is disgust and a barely concealed racism. Briefed on the activities of the traditionalist militants, he declares that "If they want to do some good they should clean up their own front yards first". That his attitude is so transparently based on disavowal of his roots is wittily brought home: Cooch renames him "Ray Little Weasel", much to his discomfort, while the Native Americans dub him "the Washington redskin" after the American football team.

It is only through the subtle but persistent prodding of the tribal policeman, Walter Crow Horse, that Levoi begins to face up to himself. Walter introduces him both to Maggie, a Sioux who preferred to return to the reservation from that "place called the twentieth century" (a choice Levoi cannot as yet comprehend but which he will make in turn), and to the medicine man, Grandpa Sam Reaches, who bit by bit becomes the FBI man's mentor. Through Maggie, the film-makers articulate an unusually radical political analysis of the Native American position (informed in part, no doubt, by Michael Apted's previous project, the documentary *Incident at Oglala*, about Leonard Peltier), which they go so far as to promote momentarily - but significantly - over and above the significance of Levoi's case. "We know the difference between the reality of freedom and the illusion of freedom", she says. "It's about power".

Even in the context of the case, she is more right than she knows: the final revelation, reminiscent of *Chinatown* in its social dimension, concerns the sale of land rights for access to uranium deposits, and the strip-mining that will inexorably poison the reservation's water supply. It is in keeping with this knowledge that when the case is solved, not only are the guilty unpunished (Cooch will be reassigned after an internal inquiry) but Levoi has rejected his own role in the FBI - in a sense, Agent Levoi has been the real villain of the piece.

Rather against the odds, this still contrives to be a progressive, not a nihilistic ending. Levoi's spiritual awakening is woven into the homicide investigation largely through his relationship with Grandpa Reaches, and the gradual movement from exasperation to respect and affection is accomplished with humour and sensitivity. Spirituality is not an easy quality to accommodate in a genre film, and mysticism is usually restricted to horror movies. Apted's rather tinpot dream sequences and Val Kilmer's goofy grin don't do the trick, but by tying it in with the progress of a murder case in which the key is a new political consciousness, *Thunderheart* can claim a degree of radicalism: fundamental reform from the roots. It is certainly Apted's best film to date.

Tom Charity

Unforgiven

USA 1992

Director: Clint Eastwood

Certificate 15
Distributor Warner Bros
Production Company Warner Bros
Executive Producer David Valdes
Producer Clint Eastwood
Associate Producer Julian Ludwig
Production Associates Matt Palmer
John Lind
Production Co-ordinators Penny Gibbs
Sonora: Carol Trost
Production Managers Bob Gray
Sonora: David Valdes
Unit Manager Lynne Bespflug
Location Manager Rino Pace
Casting Phyllis Huffman
Canada: Stuart Aikins
Assistant Directors Scott Maitland
Bill Bannerman
Grant Lucibello
Tom Rooker
Sonora: Jeffrey Wetzell
Screenplay David Webb Peoples
Director of Photography Jack N. Green
Panavision
Colour Technicolor
Camera Operators Stephen St. John
Roger Vernon
Editor Joel Cox
Production Designer Henry Bumstead
Art Directors Rick Roberts
Adrian Gorton
Set Design James J. Murakami
Set Decorators Janice Blackie-Goodine
Special Effects Co-ordinator: John Frazier
Foreman: Maurice Routely
Music Lennie Niehaus
Music Editor Donald Harris
Wardrobe Head Glenn Wright
Wardrobe Supervisors Men: Carla Hetland
Joanne Hansen
Set Costumer Valerie O'Brien
Make-up Head Mike Hancock
Titles/Opticals Pacific Title
Supervising Sound Editors Alan Robert Murray
Walter Newman
Dialogue: Karen Spangenberg
Sound Editors Neil Burrow
Gordon Davidson
Marshall Winn
Butch Wolf
Cindy Marty
Dialogue: James Isaacs
Karen G. Wilson
Supervising ADR Editor Devon Curry
Sound Recordists Rob Young
Sonora: Michael Evje
Music: Bobby Fernandez

Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists Les Fresholtz
Vern Poore
Dick Alexander
Foley Taj Soundworks
Technical Consultant Buddy Van Horn
Wranglers Head: John Scott
Bosses: Tom Bews
Tom Glass
Tom Eirikson

Cast
Clint Eastwood
William Munny
Gene Hackman
"Little Bill" Daggett
Morgan Freeman
Ned Logan
Richard Harris
English Bob
Jaimz Woolvett
"Schofield Kid"
Saul Rubinek
W.W. Beauchamp
Frances Fisher
Strawberry Alice
Anna Thomson
Delilah Fitzgerald
David Mucci
Quick Mike
Rob Campbell
Davey Bunting
Anthony James
Skinny Dubois
Tara Dawn Frederick
Little Sue
Beverly Elliott
Silky
Liisa Repo-Martell
Faith
Josie Smith
Crow Creek Kate
Shane Meier
Will Munny
Aline Levasseur
Penny Munny
Cherrienne Cardinal
Sally Two Trees
Robert Koons
Crocker
Ron White
Clyde Ledbetter
Mina E. Mina
Muddy Chandler
Henry Kope
German Joe Schultz
Jeremy Ratcliff
Deputy Andy Russell
John Pyper-Ferguson
Charley Hecker
Jefferson Mappin
Fatty Rossiter
Walter Marsh
Barber
Garner Butler
Eggs Anderson
Larry Reese
Tom Luckinbill
Blair Haynes
Paddy McGee
Frank C. Turner
Fuzzy
Sam Karas
Thirsty Thurston
Lochlyn Munro
Texas Slim
Ben Cardinal
Johnny Foley
Philip Hayes
Lippy MacGregor
Michael Charrois
Wiggins
Bill Davidson
Buck Barthol
Paul McLean
James Herman
Michael Maurer
Train People
Larry Joshua
Bucky
George Orison
The Shadow
Gregory Goossen
Fighter

11,746 feet
131 minutes

William Munny's wife Claudia – having shocked her mother by contracting a marriage to “a known thief and murderer” – dies of smallpox in 1878. Two years later, in Big Whiskey, Wyoming, a drunken cowboy badly scars a prostitute, Delilah, in the saloon and whorehouse run by Skinny Dubois; Sheriff “Little Bill” Daggett lets the cowboy and his younger partner off a whipping, and instead ‘fines’ them seven ponies. Delilah's outraged associates, led by Strawberry Alice, pool their earnings to put a thousand-dollar bounty on the culprits. Munny, who is struggling to make a go of his isolated hog farm in Kansas, is approached by the cocky young “Schofield Kid”, who offers to split the bounty, although he is unimpressed by Munny's ‘reformed’ self.

At first, invoking the example of his dead wife, Munny refuses, but later sets out after the Kid, first picking up his old associate Ned Logan, now a farmer married to an Indian, Sally Two Trees. Meanwhile, the flamboyant English Bob – a veteran gunfighter who specialises in shooting Chinamen for the railroad companies – turns up in Big Whiskey with his nervous ‘biographer’, W. W. Beauchamp, in tow, only to be beaten and jailed by his old adversary Daggett for not surrendering his firearms within city limits. While Munny and Logan catch up with the trigger-happy Kid – who turns out to be short-sighted – Beauchamp transfers his loyalties to Daggett, who gives him his own version of the shoot-outs so colourfully described by English Bob.

Eventually, the three bounty hunters arrive in Big Whiskey: Logan and the Kid avail themselves of the whorehouse, while Munny, shivering feverishly in the saloon, allows himself to be humiliated and beaten by Sheriff Daggett. He is nursed back to health by Logan and the prostitutes, and a friendship develops between Munny and Delilah. The bounty hunters surprise the cowboys of the Bar-T ranch in a canyon; Logan wounds the younger of the two men they are after, but Munny has to take over when he is unable to finish the job. In disgust, Logan decides to ride back to Kansas, but is captured by Daggett's deputies and tortured to reveal the identities of his two associates.

Munny and the Kid surprise the second culprit, and the Kid shoots him at point-blank range on the lavatory – an act which convinces him to give up a career as an ‘assassin’. When they are paid by one of the prostitutes, Munny learns that Logan has died at Daggett's hands. Riding into Big Whiskey alone, where he finds Logan displayed outside the saloon, Munny confronts and kills Daggett, Skinny Dubois and all the deputies, while Beauchamp looks on in terror. He then rides away in high dudgeon, promising to wreak further vengeance on anyone who cuts up a whore. Reputedly, he then left with his children to become a successful dry-goods merchant in San Francisco.

When *High Plains Drifter* was released in 1972, Malpas issued a press still which showed Clint Eastwood standing next to two gravestones: the inscriptions on them read “Donald Siegel” and “Sergio Leone”. Similarly, *Unforgiven* ends with the words “Dedicated to Sergio and Don”, both of whom have died since Eastwood's last Western, *Pale Rider* (1985). At first sight, *Unforgiven* seems a very fitting *arrivederci* to Eastwood-the-director's two great mentors: like the Man with No Name, Bill Munny becomes a single-minded bounty hunter, his rival for the reward being a frock-coated ‘specialist’ with a leather bag full of weaponry (like Colonel Mortimer in *For a Few Dollars More*); but he also proves susceptible to the influence of women, and like the hero of *The Beguiled* recovers from his wounds with help from a sisterhood of unmarried women.

These similarities and the dedication aside, however, *Unforgiven* owes much more to Eastwood's own Westerns as a director since the early 70s. William Munny (William Bonney meets the cash nexus?) is a hog farmer who travels the vengeance trail from Kansas to Wyoming, picking up a family of ‘misfits’ in the process – a black farmer married to a Native American, a short-sighted kid with growing pains, a victimised young prostitute called Delilah – and learns to confront his own past along the way. That's the first half of *Unforgiven*, and it closely resembles *The Outlaw Josey Wales*; then, when Munny reaches his destination, he is transformed by circumstances into a superhuman avenger who steps out of a thunderstorm to shoot down five people before riding off into the wilderness. That's the last reel, school of *High Plains Drifter*.

The twist – an important one – is that *Unforgiven* reverses the progression of the earlier films by having its central character gradually revert to type as a gunfighter, instead of settling down in a little house on the prairie. It's as if Eastwood is going back over his career as a Western hero to take stock of how far he has travelled, eventually arriving at the heart of darkness. At the beginning of the film, Munny is always talking with regret and even contrition about “the things I done in the old days”, or “the sins of my youth”. There are running gags about Munny

falling off his horse (“I ain't really been in the saddle for a while”), and about the fact that he now needs a scattergun to stand a chance of hitting anything. It is made clear that Munny has become a sensitive single parent to his two children, dislikes cruelty to horses as well as to women, and has generally turned New Age.

At this stage in the story, Eastwood seems almost like a minor character, a team player, in his own film: Gene Hackman, Richard Harris and Morgan Freeman are given the lion's share of both screen time and charisma. But as he strides into the Big Whiskey whorehouse in his long coat, his hat pulled down over his eyes, with the famous Eastwood scowl on his face – the first in the film – and spits out the words, “Who's the fella owns this shithole?”, we are left in no doubt that all his good intentions have gone out the window. It's a great cinematic moment, and visually this reversal is photographed (by Jack N. Green, protégé of Bruce Surtees) as a series of stark – sometimes too stark – contrasts: the farm and the journey in crisp, bright sunlight, the town in rain and murk and darkness, a bronze darkness which has almost become Eastwood's pictorial trademark since *Tightrope* (1984).

Unusually, *Unforgiven* is also punctuated with direct visual and verbal references to past Hollywood Westerns. Big Whiskey, with its snow-capped mountains in the background and its main street a sea of mud, is just like the town in *Shane*. There are Rooster Cogburn-style gags, Munny's two children are called Will and Penny, and the final section of the film mirrors Wellman's *The Ox-Bow Incident* (one of Eastwood's favourite films). Yet although the script is by David Webb Peoples (of *Bladerunner* fame), *Unforgiven* goes against the grain of recent Westerns (*Silverado*, *Young Guns*) by eschewing irony and hipness and fashionable post-modernism. The references seem to be there to anchor Eastwood's odyssey within a hallowed tradition, rather than to show off about the hollowness of that tradition.

In the end, there's more of ‘Don’ than ‘Sergio’ in *Unforgiven*, a Western that tries hard to show that its heroic (rather than anti-heroic) protagonist is, as he puts it, “just a fella now; I ain't no different than anyone else no more”. It resembles *The Shootist*, where the story of the lead actor's career and the film story became inseparable, and where an actor who had become ‘out of time’ managed to find a way of making contact with a contemporary audience by putting his own career into a fresh context. In interview, Eastwood has responded with no more than monosyllabic incomprehension to the suggestion that he is now in the unusual position of carrying an entire cinematic genre on his shoulders. *Unforgiven* comes across as a much more interesting reply, and his best Western – the most distinguished film he has appeared in and directed – since *The Outlaw Josey Wales*.

Christopher Frayling



To type: Clint Eastwood, Jaimz Woolvett

White Men Can't Jump

USA 1992

Director: Ron Shelton

Certificate

15
Distributor
 20th Century Fox
Production Company
 20th Century Fox
Executive Producer
 Michele Rappaport
Producers
 Don Miller
 David Lester
Production Co-ordinator
 Susan R. Ellis
Unit Production Manager
 Ed Milkovich
Location Managers
 Kokayi Ampah
 Elisa Ann Conant
Casting
 Victoria Thomas
 Associate:
 Jory Weita
Background:
 Victor Davis
ADR Voice:
 Barbara Harris
Assistant Directors
 Richard Wells
 Robert Metoyer
 Susan Moen
 Wendy Peterson
Screenplay
 Ron Shelton
Director of Photography
 Russell Boyd
Colour
 DeLuxe
Camera Operator
 Michael Alan Benson
Steadicam Operator
 Michael Meinardus
Opticals
 Pacific Title
Editors
 Paul Seydor
Film:
 Kimberly Ray
 Additional:
 Robin Katz
Production Designer
 Dennis Washington
Art Director
 Roger Fortune
Set Decorator
 Robert Benton
Murals
 Ben Frank
 Marcel Menard
 Efrain Denson
 Carlos Goyria
 Randy Legaspi
Music
 Bennie Wallace
Vocalist
 Louis Price
Music Supervisor
 Bennie Wallace
Music Editor
 Robin Katz
Songs
 "Mood Indigo" by Duke Ellington, Barney Bigard, Irving Mills; "Sympin" by Dallas Austin, Nathan Morris, Shawn Stockman, performed by Boys II Men; "Freezin' Em" by Marvin Taylor, Thomas Taylor, William Taylor Jr., performed by Level III; "Jump for It" by Jesse Johnson, Kim Cage, Keith Lewis, performed by Jesse Johnson; "How to Act" by Rom, George Clinton III, Philippe Wynn, performed by College Boyz; "I Got You (I Feel Good)" "Super Bad" by and performed by James Brown; "Let Me Make It Up to You Tonight" by

Diane Warren, performed by Jody Watley; "I Take What I Want" by Isaac Hayes, David Porter, Mabon Hodges; "Purple Haze" by and performed by Jimi Hendrix; "Careless Love" by and performed by Ray Charles; "Can You Come Out and Play" by William Harmon, Christopher Troy, Derrick Edmondson, Theodore Martin Jr., Rodney Lee, performed by the O'Jays; "If I Lose" by Ron Shelton, Bennie Wallace, performed by Aretha Franklin; "Watch me Do My Thing" by Linda Brown, Kim Armstrong, David Pensado, Todd Chapman, performed by Lipstick; "Jeopardy! Theme" by Merv Griffin; "Never Let 'em See You Sweat" by Phillip Stewart II, Tony Haynes, Thaddis Harrell Jr., performed by Go West; "I'm Going Up" by Benjamin Winans, performed by Bebe Winans, Cece Winans; "He Stopped Loving Her Today" by Bobby Braddock, Curly Putman, performed by George Jones; "Area Code 213" by and performed by Boo-Yaa T.R.I.B.E.; "The Best Things in Life Are Free" by B.G. DeSylva, Lew Brown, Ray Henderson; "A to the K" by Louis Freeze, Senen Reyes, Larry Muggerrud, performed by Cypress Hill; "Fakin the Funk" by Shawn McKenzie, Kevin McKenzie, William Paul Mitchell, performed by Main Source; "The Hook" by and performed by Queen Latifah; "Gloria" by Ron Shelton, Woody Harrelson; "White Men Can't Jump" by Dallas Austin, Randy Ran, performed by Riff
Costume Design
 Francine Jamison-Tanchuck
Costume Supervisor
 Betty Jean Slater
Costumers
 Men:
 Michael Chavez
 Women:
 Norma Johnson
Head Make-up Artist
 Stephanie Cozart
Make-up Artist
 Patricia Messina
Title Design
 Wayne Fitzgerald
Supervising Sound Editors
 Bruce Fortune
 Gordon Ecker
Sound Editors
 John Kwiatkowski
 Anthony R. Milch
 Bob Bradshaw
 Steve Schwalbe
 Larry Carow
 Howell Gibbens
 Kim Voigt
 Pat Bietz

Supervising ADR Editor

Becky Sullivan
ADR Editors
 Holly Huckins
 Michele Perone
 Barbara Buguski
Supervising Foley Editor
 Scott D. Jackson
Foley Editors
 Leslie Gaulin
 Shawn Sykora
 Michael Dressel
 Bill Dannevik
 Steve Richardson
Sound Recordists
 Kirk Francis
Music:
 Roger Rhodes
ADR Recordist
 Doc Kane
 Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
 John Reitz
 Dave Campbell
 Gregg Rudloff
Sound Effects
 Gary Bluffer
Consultants
 Basketball:
 Rob Ryder
Script:
 Reggie Leon
Production Assistants
 Lee Millay
 Leonard Haggarty
 Dan Lipe
 Marius Balchunas
Stunt Co-ordinator
 Julius LeFlore
Stunts
 Gary Baxley
 Simone Boisseree
 John Michael Johnson
 Scott A. Leva
Basketball Coach
 Dick Baker
P.T. Trainer
 Frank O'Neill

Cast

Wesley Snipes
 Sidney Deane
 Woody Harrelson
 Billy Hoyle
 Rosie Perez
 Gloria Clemente
 Tyra Ferrell
 Rhonda Deane
 Cyk Cozart
 Robert Kadeem Hardison
 Ernest Harden Jr.
 George John Marshall Jones
 Walter Marques Johnson
 Raymond David Roberson
 T.J.
 Kevin Benton
 Zeke Nigel Miguel
 Dwight "the Flight" McGhee
 Duane Martin
 Willie Lewis
 Bill Henderson
 Sonny Craver
 Jon Hendricks
 The Venice Beach Boys
 Eloy Casados
 Tony Stucci

Frank Rossi
 Frank Stucci
 Freeman Williams
 Duck Johnson
 Louis Price
 Eddie "The King" Faroo
 Alex Trebek
 Alex Trebek
 Reggie Leon
 Reggie
 Sarah Stavrou
 Etiwanda Reynaldo Rey
 Tad Lanei Chapman
 Lanei Irene Nettles
 Real Estate Agent
 Torri Whitehead
 Tanya Lisa McDowell
 Alisa David Maxwell
 Malcolm Dion B. Vines
 The Bank Bill Caplan
 Tournament Announcer
 Richard James Baker
 Tournament Referee
 Amy Golden
 Big Guy's Girlfriend
 Jeanette Strubar
 Little Guy's Girlfriend
 Zandra Hill
 Fred P. Gregory
 Sponsors
 Carl E. Hodge
 Pickup Truck Driver
 Ruben Martinez
 Ruben Gary Lazar
 Oki-Dog Businessman
 Donna Howell
 Yolanda Don Fulllove
 Jake Johnny Gilbert
 Jeopardy! Announcer
 Leonard A. Oakland
 Dr Leonard Allen
 Allan Malamud
 Rocket Scientist
 Jeanne McCarthy
 Dressing Room Staffer
 John Charles Sheehan
 Cop Gregory T. Daniel
 Leon Carl A. McGee
 Gambler Chick Hearn
 Stu Lantz
 NBA Announcers
 Ronald Beals
 Joe Metcalf
 Mahcoe Moore
 Mark Hill
 Eric Kizzlee
 Chalmers Maddox
 Leroy Michaux
 Joseph Duffy
 Pete Duffy
 Gary Moeller
 Daniel Porto
 Jake Roberts
 Lester Hawkins
 Jeffrey Todd Ballplayers
 10,385 feet
 112 minutes



Floating and stinging: Wesley Snipes

returns to his motel room where he shows his winnings to his girlfriend Gloria. She is memorising arcane bits of knowledge (food names that begin with 'q', etc.) in the hope of getting on the TV game show *Jeopardy!*.

Surprisingly, Sidney appears at the door and proposes that he and Billy team up, essentially to extend and perfect Billy's scam. Billy, who has been dodging a pair of dangerous-looking toughs, readily agrees. It transpires that he was bribed by a mobster to shave some points in a college basketball game; in the heat of the game, he reneged and now desperately needs the cash to pay the mobster back. Sidney and Billy begin their partnership: Sidney joins pick-up games in black neighbourhoods, making small bets and then claiming that he can win regardless of who is on his side. The other blacks invariably 'saddle' Sidney with the goofy-looking Billy they have seen hanging around. It proves a rewarding, if contentious, relationship: despite playing on others' racial preconceptions, the pair can't get over their own prejudices.

But Sidney's wife Rhonda, unhappy with their run-down apartment, is pressuring him to come up with the down-payment for a house. One day, in an isolated ghetto schoolyard, Billy and Sidney lose to the locals, and Billy returns home broke and dejected. Gloria senses immediately that he has been hustled, and takes him over to Sidney and Rhonda's home, where they quickly get Sidney to confess. Rhonda refuses to give the money back, but pushes Sidney into reteaming with Billy in a local contest, the Community Unity Two-on-Two Tournament, which they win. On the way home, however, attempting to disprove Sidney's old racial argument that "white men can't jump", Billy loses his entire share of their winnings.

When he returns home broke, Gloria leaves him. At the same time, the two gangsters give him a deadline for

the money he owes. Billy joins up with Sidney for one last time, not just to play but to help Gloria get her chance on *Jeopardy!*. This he manages through a friendly security guard, and after a disastrous showing in the Sports category, Gloria wins a fortune. Billy seems to agree that they can now give up the hustling life and settle down, until Sidney shows up and tells him that two legendary schoolyard players are back in town and willing to take on all comers in a high-stakes two-on-two challenge. Gloria tells Billy that he has to choose between her and basketball, and after a struggle he goes off to play with Sidney. Billy and Sidney win their game, but Billy is left with the prospect of chasing after Gloria or facing life without her.

White Men Can't Jump takes two of the oldest figures in the American comic tradition - the city slicker and the country bumpkin who is slyer than he looks - and sets them loose on contemporary urban streets. That cleverly simple idea guarantees that the film is never less than amusing, and the casting of Woody Harrelson and Wesley Snipes, and particularly Rosie Perez, ensures that even the most exposition-laden lines crackle. Yet, even at that, the film is easy to underrate: because writer-director Ron Shelton has already made a film with a sports theme, the baseball drama *Bull Durham*, and because this film leans so heavily on the comic possibilities of con games, the easygoing, unpretentious *White Men* has been treated as just a variation on a commercial formula.

But, with a remarkable lack of soapbox oratory, Shelton's film manages to catch the prevailing tone of American race relations, to show us what modern urban America really looks like, and to depict the moral quandaries that poverty inevitably forces on its victims. Typically, when an American film deals explicitly with race, it tends towards

◀ extremes of confrontation, either with a ghetto drama where white intrusion is an issue in itself, or with a Southern tale where the very existence of blacks becomes an issue. Rarely do the innumerable spheres where the races mix freely and frequently make it to the screen, and even at that, those films tend to downplay race issues. The reality of grudging acceptance and lingering bigotries seems too complex for most American film-makers, who live in the racially neutral, because almost exclusively white, film-industry ghetto.

Shelton, who was a minor-league baseball player and is known today for his basketball-playing at the Hollywood YMCA, has long experience with the fractious interracial world of sports, and it shows here. For one thing, the pick-up basketball games have been beautifully choreographed – the harsh, elbows-out grace of the city game in marked contrast to the smoother, more gentlemanly game of the pros. But even better is the verbal jousting between Billy and Sidney. In the battle each partner wages to maintain an edge over the other, they peevishly voice the racial resentments that lie close to the surface of American social comity. Sidney tells Billy to take a Jimi Hendrix tape off his car stereo because whites can't 'hear' Jimi; Billy accuses black players of preferring to look good while losing, rather than win without 'showboating'.

Aside from echoing remarks shouted over the racial divide thousands of times a day, the exchanges also mark the slow closing of the chasm, the inevitable refutation that comes with familiarity. Billy's relationship with the New York-Puerto Rican Gloria is just as important, not just because it adds another flavour to the racial stew, but because it allows Shelton to poke at one more sore spot in the self-image of the American jock. When Gloria upbraids Billy for getting her a glass of water when she's thirsty, instead of first commiserating with her over her discomfort, it seems that she is going to be the usual caricatured feminist, who tends to be shown at first as respectable and intellectual, gradually becoming more ridiculous and finally dependent and desperate. But Shelton goes the opposite way; as the film progresses, Gloria turns out to be stronger, more independent, and in some ways braver than her self-consciously macho boyfriend.

Finally, the film has an intense and welcome physicality. The sweating bodies on the courts and in the beds lend a vivid immediacy to the struggles of sport and sex. And these really are the streets of Los Angeles, from the overgrown avenues of economically stratified, racially charged Venice, to the indifferent decay of South Central, to the broken concrete of Compton. Venice is a perfect location for *White Men Can't Jump*, a former retreat of lagoons and palm-clad cottages, now home to rich and poor, white and black. As in the film, it's a place where opposites attract.

Henry Sheehan

Wuthering Heights

USA 1992

Director: Peter Kosminsky

Certificate

U

Distributor

UIP

Production Company

Paramount

Executive Producer

Simon Bosanquet

Producer

Mary Selway

Associate Producer

Chris Thompson

Production Co-ordinator

Tania Windsor

Location Managers

Howard Gibbens

Chris Brock

Tony Clarkson

2nd Unit Director

Simon Bosanquet

Casting

Sheila Trezise

Assistant Directors

Bill Westley

Gerry Toomey

Cliff Lanning

2nd Unit:

Mary Soan

Keith Hatcher

Screenplay

Anne Devlin

Based on the novel by

Emily Bronte

Director of Photography

Mike Southon

In colour

Camera Operators

Philip Sindall

2nd Unit:

Rickie Gauld

Visual Effects

The Computer

Film Company

Editor

Tony Lawson

Production Designer

Brian Morris

Art Director

Richard Earl

Draftspersons

Peter Russell

Peter Childs

Suzanna Smith

Storyboard Artist

Tony Wright

Special Effects Supervisor

Graham Longhurst

Special Effects

Peter Nottley

Geoff Hood

Peter Arnold

Music

Ryuichi Sakamoto

Music Extracts

From Eighteenth

Century Yorkshire

Sources, performed by

The Broadside Band

Music Performed by

The Royal

Philharmonic

Orchestra

Low Whistles:

Davy Spillane

Orchestrations

David Arch

Kevin Townend

Music Supervisor

Gemma Dempsey

Music Editor

Michael Connell

Songs

"Young Catherine"

by Davy Spillane,

Ryuichi Sakamoto

Choreography

Caroline Pope

Costume Design

James Acheson

Wardrobe

Supervisor:

Kenny Crouch

Joe Korer

Make-up Artists

Supervisor:

Paul Engelen

Lynda Armstrong

Title Design

Plume Partners

Titles/Opticals

Peter Watson

Sound Editors

Dubbing:

Rodney Glenn

Dialogue:

Derek Holding

ADR

Lionel Strutt

Sound Recordist

Peter Glossop

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Robin O'Donoghue

Music:

Steve Price

Andrew Taylor

Stunt Arranger

Greg Powell

Cast

Juliette Binoche

Cathy/Catherine

Ralph Fiennes

Heathcliff

Janet McTeer

Ellen Dean

Sophie Ward

Isabella Linton

Simon Shepherd

Edgar Linton

Jeremy Northam

Hindley Earnshaw

Jason Riddington

Hareton Earnshaw

Simon Ward

Mr Linton

Robert Demeger

Joseph

Paul Geoffrey

Mr Lockwood

John Woodvine

Thomas Earnshaw

Jennifer Daniel

Mrs Linton

Janine Wood

Frances Earnshaw

Jonathan Firth

Linton Heathcliff

Jon Howard

Young Heathcliff

Jessica Hennell

Young Cathy

Steven Slark

Hindley Earnshaw,

age 16

Trevor Cooper

Dr Kenneth

Rupert Holliday Evans

Vicar

Dick Sullivan

Parson

Sean Bowden

Young Hareton

9,557 feet

106 minutes

Emily Bronte visits a ruined mansion perched on top of the Yorkshire moors and is inspired to write a novel about its former inhabitants... One stormy night, Lockwood, a tenant in the area, seeks refuge at Wuthering Heights, the home of his new landlord, Heathcliff. There he has terrible nightmares in which he dreams he is visited by a young woman who resembles Catherine Earnshaw, Heathcliff's daughter-in-law. The story that Lockwood has stumbled upon starts thirty years earlier.

In the 1770s, Wuthering Heights is owned by Mr Earnshaw, father of Cathy and Hindley. One day he brings back from his travels a gypsy foundling whom he names Heathcliff. When Mr Earnshaw dies, the long-resentful Hindley banishes Heathcliff to the stables.

Years later, the grown Cathy and Heathcliff are still close. One night they go to spy on the Lintons, who live at the elegant Thrushcross Grange, but Cathy is injured when they are set upon by dogs. The Lintons take her in and invite her to stay while Heathcliff is thrown off the premises. While convalescing, she befriends the refined Isabella and her brother, Edgar. After Cathy's return to Wuthering Heights, Hindley marries but his new wife dies giving birth to a son, Hareton. In despair, Hindley starts drinking and gambling, and the child is looked after by the nurse, Nellie Dean. Cathy is courted by Edgar and agrees to marry him for his money although she admits to Nellie that she is in love with Heathcliff. When Heathcliff finds out, he disappears.

A few years later, Cathy is installed at Thrushcross Grange. It is there that she is visited by Heathcliff, who is now a man of some wealth and who has bought Wuthering Heights from the debt-ridden Hindley. Isabella is attracted to Heathcliff, much to Cathy's displeasure, and subsequently marries him. Meanwhile, Cathy gives birth to a daughter but becomes ill and dies soon after being visited by Heathcliff. Hindley dies shortly after her and Hareton becomes Heathcliff's ward. Heathcliff also has a son of his own, Linton, by Isabella.

Eighteen years pass. One day, Heathcliff encounters Catherine Linton on the moors and invites her to Wuthering Heights to meet her cousins. Later, he forces the sickly Linton to write a love letter to her to bring her back to Wuthering Heights. Once she has arrived, he coerces her into marriage with Linton. Thus Heathcliff becomes sole heir to the Linton fortune on the impending deaths of Linton Senior and Junior. Stranded at the desolate Wuthering Heights, Catherine develops a friendship with Hareton. Later, the avenging Heathcliff dies, and in death is finally reunited with Cathy.

The first film to come out of Paramount's UK venture, this *Wuthering Heights* has all the art of a Brodies' notes version of Emily Bronte's dark

and passionate novel. The only hint of a more considered approach comes in the film's allusions to the class politics of the book. The Lintons, ensconced in the Gainsboroughesque splendour of Thrushcross Grange, are the insipid and almost mute last vestiges of the landed class soon to be usurped by the Heathcliffs of this world – the brethren of the dark, satanic mills.

Otherwise, it is a film that has all the Gothic accessories, with the tempestuous weather, barren moors (complete with two phallic obelisks) and the mournful dwelling of Wuthering Heights. But it does not know about the transgressive power of the Gothic genre. To be true to the novel, any film of *Wuthering Heights* should be able to reach out, like Cathy's ghost crashing through the glass in Lockwood's chamber, and touch the soul. For a film that is about the turbulent extremes of emotion, in which desire festers into hateful destruction, it is curiously – and ridiculously – empty. When Cathy comes to what in the novel is the psychologically terrifying conclusion, "I am Heathcliff", it seems quite prosaic, delivered to Nellie Dean across a kitchen table in Juliette Binoche's less than convincing accent.

Binoche's accent is a problem throughout the film, and has been seized on by critics unable to find anything else of cinematic interest to comment on. She may have the requisite mix of feral guilelessness and unworldly beauty, but her performance is made risible as soon as she opens her mouth. Produce, Mary Selway, a former casting director, may have felt she was taking an imaginative gamble but ultimately it seems an absurd choice which only serves to snatch the film away from Cathy – and Catherine – and weaken anything that a *Wuthering Heights* for the 90s might have to say about the sexual politics of Bronte's novel. It's true that Ralph Fiennes, complete with wild, whip-lash hair and swarthy make-up, does not limit his portrayal of Heathcliff to all smouldering, rough sexuality, but the contradictions in this rogue male character are never fully explored.

Ultimately, the film's failure lies in its lack of cinematic vision. The director, Peter Kosminsky, who has previously only directed for television, offers only the most obvious visual interpretation. It is an indication of his aesthetic style that, in one of the final shots, he frames Cathy and Heathcliff out on the moors in a vaseline-lensed glow. The effect gives *Wuthering Heights* all the allure of a TV costume romance. Indeed that is all that this version adds up to, but one that has been drenched in miserable English rain and a whiny music score (courtesy of Ryuichi Sakamoto) that has been over-fed with highly-strung violins. It's the kind of overblown production that is so routinely and successfully pilloried by contemporary satirists that one is tempted not to take any of *Wuthering Heights* seriously.

Lizzie Francke

Born Kicking

United Kingdom 1992

Director: Mandie Fletcher

Distributor

BBC TV
Production Company
BBC Films
For Screen One
Executive Producer
Richard Broke
Producer
Tony Garnett
Production Associate
Tim Ironside-Wood
Production Operatives
Supervisor
John Rice
Production Manager
Sue Lockerby
Location Manager
Melanie Dicks
Casting
Anne Hopkinson
Assistant Directors
Dermot Boyd
R. J. Simpson
David Reid

Screenplay
Barry Hines
Director of Photography
David Walsh
In colour

Editor
Sue Wyatt
Production Designer
David Buckingham

Music
Hal Lindes
Costume Design
Robin Stubbs

Make-up
Jean Speak
Sound Editor
Malcolm McKenna

Sound Recordist
Terry Elms
Sound Re-recordist
Peter Smith

Football Adviser
Alan Dicks
Production Assistants
Judy Owen
Rachel Todd

Cast

Eve Barker
Roxanne Reddy
Denis Lawson
Victor Grace
Sheila Ruskin
Joanne Grace
Julie Hewlett
Kate
Carole Hayman
Mrs Reddy
George Irving
Eddie Lang
John Abneri
Archie
Norman Bird
Radley
David McAllister
Tobin
Garfield Morgan
William Curtley
Paul Des Bois
Chris Fox
James Noble
Hudson
Robert Perkins
Greg Thompson
Anthony Warren
Foster
John Benfield
Mr Reddy
Katie Peltzman
Sarah Reddy
Ros Ereira
Lisa Reddy
Nicholas Courtney
Tim Ayling
David Pinner
Paul Cox
Ian Arthur
Tandy
Thomas Craig
Miles
Lawrence Batty
Goalkeeper
Lesley Kaufman
Teacher
Martin Cochrane
Security Guard
Barry Aird
Reporter
Alexandra Spencer
Television Reporter
Peggy Phango
Cleaner
Graeme Briggs
Simon
Glynn Mills
Kelly
Susie Ann Watkins
Michelle Thompson
Debbie Killingback
Karen Thompson
Rupert Holiday-Evans
Record Producer
This Gigantic World
Rock Band
Norman Mitchell
Man at Football Match
Muttley
Rex the Dog
Terry Wogan
Himself
Bob Wilson
Himself
Michael Whale
Himself

7,970 feet
(at 25 fps) 85 minutes

A scout for First Division football club EPR ("The Swifts") is on his way home after watching a disappointing young prospect when he notices Roxanne Reddy, a tall and powerful sixth-form girl, running rings around the opposition in a women's match. He bets his manager £100 that she will score a goal in a club training game. She does, and Victor Grace, the club chairman, though caught up in an expensive leisure-dome development, enlists the help of TV's Bob Wilson and then his local MP in a bid to get the FA to change their rule forbidding women from playing alongside men. Roxanne's father is pleased, though her mother – who wanted Roxanne to go to university – is upset. The press set up camp outside their door, and the FA gives in to mounting public pressure.

Roxanne signs with EPR, and moves into a luxury flat found for her by Grace, who opts to manage her affairs even though his property deal is in trouble. Roxanne starts training, and is picked for the first game of the season. She scores, although the other players are unwelcoming; only the captain and the chairman's wife make friendly overtures. Despite rough treatment from opposition fans and players in the coming weeks, "Foxy Roxy" is a sensation: scoring goals, featuring in magazines, and having dolls named after her. But when she sprains her ankle while advertising perfume, Greg Thompson, the forward she has ousted from the side, scores two goals. Fit again, she is picked in his place, sparking an angry confrontation between Thompson and the team manager.

Roxanne persuades Grace to let her go to Milan with him, to help launch a Roxy fashion line, and seduces him while she packs. In Italy, they are photographed together in intimate conversation. Their return plane is delayed, Roxanne misses a game, and Thompson scores a hat-trick. The manager orders her to play for the reserves, where Roxanne is sent off for punching someone who fouls her. Grace tries to force the manager to pick her for the first team, but his position is undermined by tabloid revelations about his relationship with Roxanne. He breaks off the affair and tells her to get a new manager. She learns that it was Thompson's wife who told all to the newspapers, and angrily confronts her.

While recording a pop single, she breaks down in tears, and goes home to her still unsympathetic mother. She tells a former schoolfriend, now at college, that she intends to leave the game and apply again to university. Her friend tells her how much her success means to the thousands of women who follow her career. Now determined to help EPR win the FA Cup, she resists Grace's effort to sell her to a rival club to bail out his business deal, but finds herself relegated to the substitutes' bench for the quarter final – while her mother, who has at last come to watch her, waits in the stands. Just before the end of the game, with the score one all, Roxy replaces an injured player, is fouled, and scores

from the penalty, EPR go on to win the Cup. The scout shakes his head and turns for home – it was all a daydream. But somewhere on a housing estate, a young girl is refining her skills...

Football has recently become a popular arena for gender-bending drama. Starting with *Gregory's Girl* and continuing with *The Manageress* and the recent Keith Allen-scripted Comic Strip effort *The Crying Game* (which had a gay Gazza figure as its hero), the national game's macho certainties have been fairly thoroughly overturned. But this Screen One production from the respected striking partnership of Barry Hines and Tony Garnett manages to be a worthwhile contribution to the football-field-as-sex-battleground canon, as well as an entertaining piece of TV drama.

First-time director Mandie Fletcher makes a virtue of the broad strokes which the story necessitates, and the fairy-tale atmosphere is a good cover for some quite sophisticated cultural analysis. The film is unable to resist – as was *Gregory's Girl* – the inevitable 'free kick wall' joke wherein the camera pans across anxiously shielded male genitals to the female player covering her breasts. But the more obvious disruptions caused by the female invasion of a previously all-male world – the threat to locker-room solidarity, for example – often turn out to be the most interesting ones. The effects of the Roxy-inspired surge in female interest in football are nicely handled, as the girls take over school playgrounds and a club director recoils in horror as the old *Daily Telegraph* pitch-side signboard is replaced by one for *Cosmopolitan*.

This is just the sort of conflict thrown up in real life by the game's current lurchings between a stronghold of working-class mateyness and a spruced-up family leisure industry. *Born Kicking* is at its best depicting the way football connects with the broader culture and the mass media: to which end, it employs cameo appearances from Bob Wilson, Michael Whale of BBC South East Sport, and even Terry Wogan. Roxanne's mother is persuaded of the importance of what her daughter has done when she finds a Subbuteo team with a player modelled on Roxy. The actual football scenes hold up surprisingly well, and there are good performances off the pitch too, from newcomer Eve Barker and Denis Lawson as the club chairman.

There is a slight surfeit of roles of helpful and nurturing black friends (three: schoolmate, club cleaner and admiring fellow player). This seems a self-conscious acknowledgment that the real-life battle for acceptance of black footballers is a subject which so far hasn't featured in a TV drama. The 'it was all a dream' ending is clearly meant to defuse quibbles about the unlikelihood of events like this ever happening. But it is still a hackneyed device, and rather devalues what has gone before.

Ben Thompson

A Very Polish Practice

United Kingdom 1992

Director: David Tucker

Distributor

BBC TV
Production Company
BBC Films
For Screen One
Executive Producer
Richard Broke
Producer
Ken Riddington
Associate Producer
Joanna Gueritz
Production Manager
Christine McMurrich
Casting
UK:
Joyce Nettles
Poland:
Violetta Buhl
Assistant Directors
Paul Judges
Melanie Panario
Clare Nicholson
Screenplay
Andrew Davies
Director of Photography
Ian Punter
In colour
Graphic Design
Zosia Rooney
Editor
Ken Pearce
Production Designer
Bruce Macadie
Music
Carl Davis
Costume Design
Anna Buruma
Make-up Design
Christine Walmsley
Cotham
Sound Editor
Alan Fowlie
Sound Recordist
Tim Humphries
Sound Re-recordist
Aad Wirtz
Medical Adviser
David Williams

Adam Przedzysinski
Tomasz
Dariusz Odjia
Marek
Polly Hemingway
Ewa
Nina Marc
Helena
Maria Quoss
Maria
Agnieszka Robotka
Renata
Jelena Budimir
Peasant Whore
Eileen Maciejewska
Airline Woman
Gertan Klaber
Swarthy Man on Plane
Kazimierz Kaczor
Piotr
Lola Rand
Old Lady with Banana
Monika Hejsak
Barbara
Grzegorz Stachurski
Drunk Man in Hospital
Jack Jezioranski
Young Man in Pain
Juliette Grassby
Nurse Kraziniewska
Zofia Merle
Barbara Babilinska
Nuns
Leon Niemczyk
Maciej Orlos
Priests
Milek Hryniewicz
Lech Dyblik
Eugeniusz Karczewski
Jacek Ryniewicz
Woollen Caps
Jerzy Prochnicki
Hospital Porter
Wojtek Piekarski
Patient Needing Drugs
Andrzej Chichowski
Pawel Przybła
Walters
Piotr Siejka
Hotel Porter
Joachim Lamza
Man in Bar
Jakub Kopec
Shoe-shine Boy
Andrzej Kozak
Worried Man

8,905 feet
(at 25 fps) 95 minutes

Stephen Daker, formerly a doctor at the University of the Lowlands, now lives in Warsaw with his Polish wife Grete and their son Tomasz, and works at a general hospital. His erstwhile colleague, Bob Buzzard, a salesman for the medical supply combine Hamburger International, flies to Warsaw to explore sales opportunities, and is met at the airport by representatives of Polish entrepreneur Tadeusz Melnick. Meanwhile, appalled at his hospital's lack of drugs and proper equipment, Stephen complains to the director, Reynard Krapowski, but to no avail. Instead, he is despatched to a medical trade fair in a Warsaw hotel, where he meets Buzzard.

During an increasingly drunken evening, Buzzard's wallet is stolen, and Stephen catches a glimpse of Grete – supposedly in Cracow teaching art – being escorted by a man whom Buzzard identifies as Melnick. Alarmed, Stephen drives to Cracow and finds ►

◀ Grete, who accuses him of unwarranted jealousy. Buzzard is invited to Melnick's château, but when the police show up Melnick escapes, while Buzzard is temporarily arrested. Krapowski tells Stephen that he is considering a deal with Melnick and Hamburger International. Returning from Cracow, Grete confesses that her affair with Melnick dates back several years, and that if he has to leave Poland she may go with him.

Stephen is abducted to meet Melnick, who offers him a deal: drugs for the hospital in return for Grete; if Stephen refuses, he risks being eliminated. Through linguistic confusion, a prostitute arrives at Buzzard's hotel room. Afterwards, while he sleeps, she robs him, and he arrives dishevelled at the hospital to see Melnick's drugs arriving: Hamburger have been cut out of the deal. Stephen, also seeing the drugs, rushes to the airport, where he finds Grete and Tomasz with Melnick, who departs alone. Stephen and his family drive home, stopping to rescue Buzzard who is trying to sell his remaining assets in a market.

● Andrew Davies' two six-part TV series, *A Very Peculiar Practice*, derived much of their black humour from the clash between socialised medicine – a free clinic in a redbrick university – and the rapacious demands of the market, as successive vice-chancellors attempted to cut funding, restrict resources and privatise everything that wasn't nailed down. This one-off Screen One pendant to the series mines a still blacker vein of comedy by shifting to a venue where the same clash of ideologies has become nakedly lethal: present-day Poland.

Though the film stands on its own, several running gags (along with three of the characters) have been transferred across from the TV series: Stephen's inability to convince anyone he's not teetotal, Buzzard's ghastly marriage, and the pair of scavenging nuns who haunted the opening of each TV episode. The nuns in particular are woven deftly into the fabric of the film, forming part of the flourishing culture of bribes, kickbacks and black-marketing that we see sprouting from the ruins of state Communism. Against this background, the desperations that drive Davies' characters stand out all the more starkly. Even Melnick, the confident fixer – Mr New Poland incarnate – dwindles under pressure into a love-sick obsessive.

The film is all but stolen, though, by its richest comic creation, David Troughton's Bob Buzzard – a born victim striving to become a predator. Davies and his director, David Tucker, have neatly transplanted to a yet more apocalyptic setting their comic-pessimistic vision of fragile personal happiness amid encroaching social breakdown. "Forget about Solidarity," says Trevor Peacock's time-serving hospital director, "the future of Poland lies with the Melnicks of this world...and with chaps like me".

Philip Kemp

Short films

Between Two Worlds

United Kingdom 1992

Director: Mark Nash

Distributor
BFI
Production Company
BFI
In association with
Channel Four
Television
Executive Producer
Kate Ogborn
Producer
Wendy Ellerker
Assistant Director
Andy Powell
Screenplay
Mark Nash
Director of Photography
Nina Kellgren
In colour
Editor
Robert Hargreaves
Production Designer
Derek Brown
Art Director
Alex Craig
Special Effects
Steve Farrer
Music
David Sinclair
Costume Design
Anne Curtis Jones
Make-up Artist
Kim Grey

Sound Editor
Clive Pendry
Sound Recorder
Trevor Mathison
Foley Artist
Jack Stew
Production Assistant
Finn Cullen

Cast
Jason Durr
Graham
Timothy Bateson
Dr Ludwig
John Wilson
Paul
Jacques Azagury
Man in Park
Beverly Levy
Woman with Dog
Lizzie Azagury
Thelma Speirs
Iain Mercier
Isaac Julien
Shop Customers

972 feet
27 minutes

16mm

● Graham, who works in an exotic flower shop, is in psychoanalysis with Dr Ludwig, a Czechoslovakian analyst. On the couch, Graham remembers scenes of his childhood, and a trip with his father to a conference in Czechoslovakia. Graham admits to Paul – his boss and recently his lover – that the analysis is depressing him. He tells Dr Ludwig about a dream of an erotic encounter with a woman in Delphi. He also reveals that he has slept with Paul, and talks of his anxieties in sexual relationships with women. On a later visit, Graham gets no answer when he rings Dr Ludwig's doorbell, and then learns that he was in hospital following an asthma attack. Later, Dr Ludwig's son phones the shop to inform Graham of the doctor's death; a distraught Graham is comforted by Paul.

● Over the length of a feature, it might conceivably be possible to convey the dynamics of a course of psychoanalysis, but to 'do' analysis in a 27-minute short seems a reckless undertaking. Analysis is by nature a slow process of unravelling repetitions, whereas the short typically derives its power from making its points all but simultaneously and in shorthand fashion. Mark Nash's film may not actually claim to get to grips with analysis as such, but nevertheless it fails to involve the viewer in the process that its hero is going through. *Between Two Worlds* contents itself with dips into the unconscious of a subject we never begin to know, and never persuades us that we want to know in the first place.

"I stand between two worlds, at home in neither" – the phrase is from *Death in Venice*, which Dr Ludwig is seen reading in a Penguin Classics edition. But the nature of these two worlds

remains uncertain. Graham is caught between two sexual longings, between his image of himself as a heterosexual male in Clint Eastwood boots (a present from an old girlfriend) and the homosexuality he is barely willing to acknowledge. The theme of sexuality and self-awareness is the most obvious link with the Thomas Mann story, but there are other 'betweens' in this film. As analysand, Graham is caught between the unconscious and the real, between memories of his father and the analyst as surrogate father, even between the here and now of London and the European past represented by Dr Ludwig. The doctor, who appears not to exist outside the confines of his study (but then, what analyst does?), could also be said to represent an enclosed high culture of books, while the bike-bound Graham inhabits the outside world and pop culture.

But we remain in the dark as to the nature of Graham's problem. He tells Paul that he suffers from depressions, but the film makes it look as though his real problem might be easily solved. Graham, Paul testily suggests, is a closet case, and it looks as if he simply needs to stop looking inward and accept homosexuality – to act on the desires he feels while riding through the park, exchanging the glad eye with another male cyclist, or to reciprocate Paul's tenderness. Is the film asking us to take seriously an image of homosexuality that equates it with the weird, gnarled hothouse blooms in an exotic flower shop – an image that smacks, apparently without irony, of *fin de siècle* aestheticism?

Because the film fails to guide us through its fragmentary but often laboured imagery, it comes across as a directionless essay in solipsism. Nash goes out of his way to fragment the narrative, in the same way that, at one moment, he fragments his protagonist's body into a series of close-up shots – armpit, eye, nipple, mouth – as Graham inspects himself with a bike lamp. But the dislocation merely gives an avant-garde veneer to a film that has the visual tameness of a BBC2 pocket drama. The other serious flaw is Timothy Bateson's performance as the sort of Eastern European shrink you thought they didn't make any more – a knowing, wizened cross between George Steiner and Mole in *The Wind in the Willows*.

Jonathan Romney

Capoeira Quickstep

United Kingdom 1992

Directors: Gillian Lacey, Roberto Mader

Distributor
BFI
Production Company
BFI
In association with
Channel Four
Television
Executive Producer
Kate Ogborn
Producer
Tony Dowmunt
Assistant Director
Cilla Ware
Screenplay
Gillian Lacey
Roberto Mader

Director of Photography
Janet Tovey
In colour
Editor
Jo Ann Kaplan
Art Director
James Lee
Wolstenholme
Scenic Artist
Paul Ruxton
Music
Bania Axé Bania
Beto Barbosa
London School of
Samba
Paulino da Viola

Ross Mitchell his Band
and Singers
Original:
Karen Boswall
Choreography
Marcia Magliari
Costume Design
Penny Beard
Make-up
Jo McKenna
Sound Recorder
Karen Boswall
Production Assistant
Helena Bullivant

Cast
Carolyn Pickles
Roberto Mader
Voice-overs
Gillian Hanna
Tara Cameron
Kenneth Hadley
Jessie Teggin
Family
Bania Axé Bania
Capoeira Group
Silvia Bazzarelli
Capoeira Class
Brasil Tropical Dance
Group
Lambada Dancers
Shirley Dallas
Corky Dallas
English Samba Dancers

Marcia Dominguinno
Brazilian Samba
Dancers
Albion Morris
Morris Dancers
Amanda Owen
Luca Bariceni
Quickstep Dancers
Cida Aragão
Silvio Andrade
Pedro Martins
Paula Saboya
Ana Tereza
Andrea
Antônio
Chichi
Cristina
Demola
Errol
Fábio
Jackie
Jerton
Maria
Will
Joyce
Edson
The Beach

● The rhythm and history of the Capoeira is established in footage of two Capoeira shadow dancers and a photomontage of Brazilian slave society. The voice-over explains that the Capoeira is the dance of an oppressed race seeking freedom. In England, a girl and her Brazilian boyfriend pick up the narration in turn as each tries to explain his/her roots to the other. The silent suburbs are a reminder to the girl of her repressed lower-middle-class upbringing in which, as a sullen teenager, she rebelled against Sunday afternoon stereotypical tea, her parents' incomprehension, Tory election stickers and *Come Dancing*. The boy fights against her media-constructed view of Latin American culture.

Footage from old films, 'typical' macho Brazilian beach scenes and images from hip-wiggling Latino discos betray the girl's prejudices. Scenes from contemporary Capoeira schools are juxtaposed with traditional ballroom dancing, and true Capoeira dancers are contrasted with English Morris dancing. The history of the Capoeira as a form of fighting dance is made clearer as images of Empire are swept away. As she becomes more familiar with the true Capoeira, the girl reaches back into her past and relearns the pleasures of *Come Dancing*. The film closes with a contemporary class of whirling bare-chested male Capoeira dancers.

● Part documentary, part docu-drama, half in, half out of an experimental form, *Capoeira Quickstep* finally fails to find any overall form of its own through which to convey its message about the need for greater cross-cultural understanding. Clearly determined not to make an old-fashioned, didactic tract, the film-makers have chosen to express their ideas within a non-linear, multi-layered film at the risk, at times, of being obscure and impenetrable.

Of the many lazy routes out of imperialist and colonialist guilt, none is eas-

ier than contrasting the warm, loose, natural cultures with the rigid, distant, ritualised forms of the West. *Capoeira Quickstep* avoids these pitfalls by working through the stage of rejection and rebellion to a more mature position in which every culture is better understood. The girl protagonist's rejection of her English background is justified by a false image of the Spanish/Brazilian culture which she adopts in its place. It is only when she understands her adopted culture better that she can return to a real appreciation of the traditions and icons of her own culture without equating them unthinkingly with images of Empire or her own teenage misery.

The Left is growing up (as are its film-makers and critics) if it has begun to realise that national pride is not equivalent to jingoism and that our conceptions of our own culture can be just as wrong as our conceptions of other cultures. *Capoeira Quickstep* gestures in these directions but does not really follow through. The film succeeds in not being an anthropological essay but does not quite become anything else.

Jill McGreal

Mad Bad Mortal Beings

United Kingdom 1992

Director: Ludmilla Andrews

Distributor	Make-up Artist
BFI	Rebekah Wexler
Production Company	Sound Editors
BFI	Gerard McCann
In association with	Danny Hambrook
Channel Four	Peter Smith
Television	Sound Recordist
Executive Producers	Stephen Richardson
Kate Ogborn	Production Assistant
Sally Randle	Helena Bullivant
Producer	Cast
Fiona Morham	Sophie Okonodo
Assistant Director	Cait
Jonathan Finn	Yvonne French
Screenplay	Stella
Ludmilla Andrews	Valentine Nonyela
Lighting Camera	Marvin
Seamus McGarvey	Conrad Johnson
In colour	Barber
Editor	Adjoa Andoh
Anna Ksiezopolska	Narrator
Production Designer	
Robbie E. Harris	
Music	360 feet
Al Lethbridge	10 minutes
Costume Design	
Joey Allawia	16mm

Cait has lost her boyfriend Marvin to another woman, Stella. Battling the hold of memory and the pain of sexual jealousy, she calls upon wind, sand and tides to help reclaim her freedom. First, by jogging among the hills, clutching Marvin's photograph, she tries literally to exhale her pain. Subsequently, on the beach, she constructs a star-shaped shrine and consecrates it with symbols: shells, a blue hourglass, a mirror, and a shining mobile hung on a stick. Sitting inside the star, she studies Marvin's photo, and under its influence recalls a fight with Stella, a flight through a topiary maze, a happy moment watching her lover get his hair cut, then - back in the maze - Stella's sexual taunts. Through these meditations, Cait reclaims her emotional strength, and sets about making a final, formal farewell. First, she flattens the raised



They might be heroes: Brian Bovell, Matthew Barrett

male image she has built in the sand, then she launches Marvin's photo downriver in a flurry of candles.

Interaction between black Britons and 'traditional' English landscape (here, manicured hills and period topiary) has become a popular means of inscribing the black presence within British art. But in *Mad Bad Mortal Beings*, this gambit aims for more than a piquant visual juxtaposition. In her high-street cotton dress, Cait is clearly an everyday, contemporary urbanite. (So is her lost love Marvin, whom we see in her photograph and glimpse in flashback at the barber's.) Yet the tools of Cait's ritual carry histories as deep as the landscape in which she performs it. In black Atlantic culture, the seashells of her shrine both enclose and protect a human's immortal soul. The water around her stands for demise and rebirth. And the lights of her mirror and mobile embody man's ineffable essence.

Here, England's natural world is deconstructed to offer up its secret racial history: a universe whose physical aspects will come to the aid of human needs. New World manifestations of this black Atlantic perspective preoccupy many African-American directors: Julie Dash dealt with it in *Daughters of the Dust* and Charles Burnett in *To Sleep with Anger*. Ludmilla Andrews' ten-minute film is no less ambitious; even its voice-over sets modern banalities against 'period' prose.

Language, it wants to suggest, contains its own stock of contrasting topographies. Cinematic convention, however, acts against such lofty aims; our curiosity is engaged more by the *ménage à trois* than by its ritual exorcism. And, without a window into each tradition - both the English pastoral and the black Atlantic - Andrews' piece is likely to seem mad and bad indeed.

Cynthia Rose

Public Enemy/Private Friends

United Kingdom 1992

Director: Danny Thompson

Distributor	Music Arrangements
BFI	Danny Thompson
Production Company	Costume Design
BFI Production	Connie Benjamin
In association with	Sound Recordist
Channel Four	Ronald Bailey
Television	Sound Re-recordist
Executive Producer	Dave Skilton
Kate Ogborn	Cast
Producer	Matthew Barrett
Nadine Marsh-Edwards	Matthew
Associate Producer	Paul Hathon
Jane Williams	Paul
Assistant Director	Peter Savidzon
Mark Layton	Peter
Screenplay	Brian Bovell
Danny Thompson	Bro'
In colour	Irma Inniss
Steadicam Operator	Shirl
Andy Shuttleworth	Josephine Melville
Animation	Pam
Keyo Yendii	Colin Mahony
Editor	White Ticket Man
Paul Hodgson	Charlie
Art Director	Beefy
Cath Pater-Lancucki	
Music	
Danny Thompson	1,620 feet
Music Performed by	18 minutes
Guitar:	
Manny Oke	

A young black man snaps up the last three tickets for a Public Enemy concert to take place at the Brixton Academy that evening. He does not notice when one of the tickets falls out of the envelope and is picked up by a middle-aged white businessman. Back at their flat, Matthew, Peter and Paul, "The Young Disciples", share out the tickets and are devastated to find they are short. With no money to buy another ticket, they split up to search for the original or an alternative. Matthew turns to his connections on the street, in particular Bro', "Prince of the Hustle". Alas, the prince turns out to be all mouth and no return.

Peter fancies himself as a lady-killer, and tries, unsuccessfully, to sweet-talk a girlfriend into giving up her ticket. Paul tries to use his intelligence and his British Bulldog, Beefy, to sniff out the prize, but Beefy proves no more dependable than the others. The Young Disciples sit gloomily on the steps of the Academy: they still have two tickets, but are pledged to go together or not at all. Walking away, they bump into the middle-aged businessman, who pulls out a handkerchief as he walks by and with it the lost ticket. The Disciples hurry to the concert after paying homage to God: "I always knew you were one of us!"

Danny Thompson's contribution to the BFI New Directors series is an amiably ramshackle affair. Announcing itself from the opening (chalk on blackboard) titles as a "A Coloured Comedy...no, A Negro Comedy...no, A Black Comedy", *Public Enemy/Private Friends* sets up a comic opposition between the proud social stereotypes celebrated in the black movement, derived largely from American pop culture and personified by Public Enemy, and the mundane experience of British black men who singularly fail to emulate their heroes. Each of The Young Disciples approaches the quest for the Holy Grail - a ticket to see Public Enemy - in the manner to which he feels most suited. And each falls short of his own estimation. Matthew's connection on the street turns out to be worthless; Peter's girlfriend laughs at his lovemaking behind his back (he leaves an "ode to your pussy" on her answerphone); and the careerist Paul's faith in his British bulldog is profoundly misplaced.

On the other hand, when the three friends decide to stick together in the face of the greatest temptation of all (two of them still have tickets for the gig after all), their solidarity is rewarded with an outrageous *deus ex machina* and an appreciative thunder-clap from above. At eighteen minutes, Thompson's film is too short to develop the sketchy characters, though any longer and the slim situation would probably be over-stretched (remember Clint's search for a pair of shoes?). It gets by, more or less, on attitude - particularly in the painfully serious company of the other entries in this year's New Director series.

Tom Charity



Breaking the mould: Julie Graham, Sadie Lee

Rosebud

United Kingdom 1992

Cheryl Farthing

Distributor
BFI
Production Company
Punchinello Pictures
For BFI Production
In association with
Channel Four
Television
Executive Producer
Kate Ogborn
Producer
Leontine Ruetie
Casting
Marilyn Johnson
Laura Scott
Assistant Director
Sian Busby
Screenplay
Cheryl Farthing
Director of Photography
Cinders Forshaw
In colour
Editor
Peter Webber
Art Director
James Lee Wolsteholme
Artist
Sarah Farthing
Music
Simon Davison
Music Performed by
Cello:
Tanera Dawkins

Songs
"Beautiful Eyes" by and
performed by Rita
Lynch; "Just One Look"
by Payne and Carroll
Costume Design
Penny Beard
Make-up Artist
Sula Loizou
Titles
Frank Passingham
Opticals
Peerless Camera
Company
Sound Recordist
Elaine Draineville
Sound Re-recordist
Clive Pendry
Production Assistant
Suzanne Lindop
Cast
Julie Graham
The Artist
Jessica Adams
Rachel Grimstead
The Couple
Clive Mitchell
The Man
Sadie Lee
The Biker
45
1,260 feet
14 minutes

A young artist moves into a new flat on her own and notices that her neighbours are a trendy lesbian couple who can't keep their hands off each other. After a day's decorating, the artist takes a bath during which the couple appear as mermaids. When the artist comes upon the couple having sex on the roof, it clinches her obsession. She then imagines them as floating golden-haired angels and

incorporates them into her latest work of art – a religious pastiche, in which a woman in a red cape is being offered white lilies by two angels. The man of her sex fantasies transforms into one of the lesbians and she dreams of rolling and kissing with her, naked on a vast bed of bright flowers.

The next day, the streets are alive with 'lesbians' – a gardener, an executive, a biker, even the woman at the bus-stop, all smile knowingly at her. The young artist, "Rosebud", enters a lesbian night-club. She spies the couple next door and confidently approaches the biker from the previous scene. They slow-dance and kiss.

Heralded as a 'short cinema feature', *Rosebud* signals the departure of the British lesbian short from the quirky, low-tech confines of Super-8 and the cautious closet of the avant-garde and its arrival at a level of technical proficiency and wider appeal. The dearth of lesbian film-making places enormous expectations on any new work in the area, but thankfully, *Rosebud* is meticulously shot, beautifully framed and imaginatively conceived.

Cheryl Farthing's decision to dispense with dialogue, relying instead on the sulk strength of Julie Graham as *Rosebud* and the persistent driving lyrics of Rita Lynch, was a good one. Lynch's music, in particular, suggests a raunchiness that the images themselves often fail to convey.

Some critics have found the seraphims, mermaids and nipple-sucking a little coy, while others bemoan

yet another 'coming-out' story, which confirms that lesbians can only ever have huggy-kissy-strokey sex. Point taken. However, *Rosebud* is laced with a delicious voyeurism, especially in the seductive, rooftop 'primal scene' which recalls that moment of passionate discovery and exclusion, regardless of sexual orientation.

But the coming-out scene is derivative of Sayles' *Lianna*, without being distanced or ironic enough to work as parody. The *Lady in Red* references are overworked and surely the angel metaphor, from Wim Wenders' *Wings of Desire* to Isaac Julien's *Looking for Langston*, has been exhausted? However, the visual pleasure of *Rosebud*'s awakening lesbian desire is powerfully constructed and Farthing has skilfully brought us a vision of glamdykes that breaks the mould of what a lesbian looks like.

Cherry Smyth

Shakti

United Kingdom 1992

Director: Sonali Fernando

Distributor
BFI Distribution
Production Companies
Feline Films Ltd
For BFI Production
In association with
Channel Four
Television
Executive Producer
Kate Ogborn
Producer
Shelley Williams
Assistant Directors
John Hackney
Kevin O'Neill
Screenplay
Sonali Fernando
Director of Photography
Cathy Greenhalgh
In colour
Editor
Alan Knight
Production Designer
Keith Khan
Music
Atul Desai
Music Performed by
Sanyogita Kumar
Ghulam Sabir

Sarwar Sabri
Costume Design
Annie Symons
Make-up Artist
Sue Wyberg
Mask-makers
Animated Extras
Wig Makers
The Hat in the Cap
Sound Editor
Arabella Hutter
Sound Recordist
Di Rushton
Creative Consultant
Sheba Chhachhi
Production Assistant
Helena Bullivant
Cast
Sheba Chhachhi
John Fletcher
Kulvinder Ghir
Surendra Kochar
Sita Nanda Kumar
Mala Sikka

468 feet
13 minutes
16mm

An Indian woman in a red coat collects rubbish in a shopping trolley at the foot of a tower block with a broken lift. Back in her flat, she paints a traditional Hindu religious design while overhearing a row next door. Other tenants from the block climb the stairs to their flats.

In the flat, the painting and the painter merge with fantasies of Kali and Dhurga and other female figures of Hindu mythology. In the painter's dream Kali devours what could be human flesh. Back in the reality of her flat the painter locks away a picture of her parents and mixes flower petals and paper with water which dries into a thick parchment paper.

Outside in the stairwell, the painter is accosted by a white thug who torments her. When she transforms a tin can into a bird he becomes more aggravated and shoves her around and insults her. But later when they meet again, the painter's fantasy figures reappear and make her strong. She crumples the thug's face in her hand.

After this success the painter magi-

cally transforms an ordinary pair of black shoes into brightly-coloured slippers. Heads turn when she walks out in them. Coming across a row of posters of a demure Indian woman she transforms their passive smiles with Kali's rude-tongued grimace. The painter smiles to herself for the first time and walks on.

'Shakti' signifies female power and strength in Hinduism. The power and strength of this film is that it tries to show rather than explain what this means. The central character, unlike the other characters, does not speak, forcing director Sonali Fernando to tell her story in images rather than with the endless stream of voices that so often characterise this kind of film. And the images are indeed striking, particularly in the fantasy sequences when the figures from the Hindu pantheon make their appearance. Fernando handles these well and integrates them into the flow of the film, giving the painter – and the artistry of the film itself – a firm and confident feel.

The contrast between the mundane rubbish-strewn reality and the richly coloured dream world which the painter also inhabits is attractively drawn. Like many other city inhabitants, the central character lives in a tower block, but unlike them she manages to transform what they have discarded into material that gives her inspiration and strength. Without words to communicate these themes, actress Sheba Chhachhi is not always able to express them in her performance, which sometimes makes it difficult to follow the hints about childhood and parents which we must assume are related to Kali's intervention.

When dealing with the realities of racist abuse, there is no more appropriate figure than the devouring goddess Kali. It is Kali who assists in the encounter with the thug, and it is her destructive power which the painter subsequently incorporates, enabling her to discover a new-found confidence. When the painter does finally smile at the end of *Shakti*, it is impossible not to share in her sense of triumph.

Julian Henriques



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On sale 17 November

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VIDEO

Mark Kermode and Trevor Johnston review this month's rental/rental premiere releases and William Green new retail/retail premiere videos

Rental

Afraid of the Dark

20.20 Vision NVT 12969
UK/France 1991

Certificate 18 Director Mark Peploe
Former Antonioni screenwriter Peploe conjures up a Dario Argento-style thriller, set in Bayswater, involving a young boy and a slasher who attacks blind victims. (S&S April 1992)

Black Robe

EV EVV 1223

Canada/Australia 1991

Certificate 15 Director Bruce Beresford
★ Brian Moore adapts his own novel for this impressive chronicle of a young French Jesuit braving the wilds of 17th century Quebec in a mission to convert the local Indians. (S&S March 1992)

Bugsy

20.20 Vision NVT 13645

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Barry Levinson
Lavish yet empty story about Benjamin Siegel, a psychopathic crook famous for founding Las Vegas. (S&S April 1992)

Coup de Ville

20.20 Vision NVT 12102

USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Joe Roth
★ Splendid rites of passage road movie about three estranged brothers who drive a Cadillac across country for their mother's birthday. (S&S March 1992)

Father of the Bride

Buena Vista D313352

USA 1991

Certificate PG Director Charles Shyer
A beleaguered father deals with the trauma of his daughter's wedding. Steve Martin gives a nicely downtrodden performance as the dad but the film lacks satirical bite. (S&S March 1992)

The Five Heartbeats

FoxVideo 1868

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Robert Townsend
Bio-pic of a fictional soul quintet's rise and fall. The ersatz Motown tunes are just right, but as a show-biz saga this is lame fare. (S&S July 1992)

Freddy's Dead: The Final Nightmare

Guild Home Video 8672

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Rachel Talalay
Dull conclusion to the moribund *Nightmare On Elm Street* series, making unimaginative use of 3-D opticals. (S&S February 1992)

Freejack

Warner PEV 12328

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Geoff Murphy
Silly sci-fi yarn about future scientists stealing the bodies of fit young men to act as new homes for the minds of dying businessmen. Features an unintentionally hilarious performance by Mick Jagger as a ruthless mercenary. (S&S May 1992)

Hear My Song

CIC Video VHB 2657

UK 1991

Certificate 15 Director Peter Chelsom
A Liverpool concert promoter goes to Ireland to bring back popular 50s tenor Josef Locke from years of tax exile. A surfeit of 'oirishry' undercuts the appeal of this factually based tall story. This version features additional footage not in the theatrical release. (S&S March 1992)

High Heels (Tacones Lejanos)

Columbia TriStar CVT 13930

Spain 1991

Certificate 18 Director Pedro Almodóvar
Melodramatic tale about the relationship between a pop star mother (Marissa Paredes) and her newsreader daughter (Victoria Abril). It falls awkwardly between high emotionalism and self-conscious farce, but the designer décors are as enviable as ever. (S&S April 1992) Subtitles

JFK

Warner PEV 12306

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Oliver Stone
★ Stone indicts everyone who was alive in 1963 as part of a global conspiracy to kill Kennedy. Based on DA Jim Garrison's prosecution of Clay Shaw, this blustering epic paints a ludicrous portrayal of Kennedy as Christ-figure, but packs a weighty emotional punch thanks to the editing. (S&S February 1992)

The Last Boy Scout

Warner PEV 12217

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Tony Scott
★ A sleazy private eye (Bruce Willis) teams up with disgraced quarterback (Damon Wayans) to avenge a trail of killings and save the reputation of professional football. Shamefully enjoyable Joel Silver formula movie-making. (S&S March 1992)

The Man in the Moon

MGM/UA Home Video PEV 52500

USA 1991

Certificate PG Director Robert Mulligan
★ Gentle rites of passage movie about two teenage sisters in an idyllic 50s bayou setting. Veteran director Mulligan handles familiar material with expertise. (S&S March 1992)

My Own Private Idaho

FoxVideo 5648

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Gus Van Sant
★ Narcoleptic rent boy River Phoenix and slumming preppie Keanu Reeves move through the seamy underworld of Portland's street people. Van Sant mingles realism with ill-fitting Shakespearean artifice, but the central

exploration of rootless emotional isolation sustains his polystylistic endeavours. (S&S April 1992)

The Prince of Tides

Columbia TriStar CVT 12840

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Barbra Streisand
Lengthy, sentimental adaptation of Pat Conroy's novel about childhood trauma. Nick Nolte turns in a fine performance as the bullish Tom Wingo who succumbs to the probing charms of his psychiatrist (Streisand). (S&S March 1992)

Rental premiere

Baby Snatcher

Odyssey ODY 325

USA 1992

Certificate PG Director Joyce Chopra
Producer Carol Dunn Trussel Screenplay Susan Rhinehart Lead Actors Veronica Hamel, Nancy McKeon, David Duchovny, Penny Fuller, Michael Madsen 89 minutes
When her baby is abducted by another childless woman, suspicion falls on the infant's mother. Chopra's earnest handling of a true story makes for a passable TV movie.

Bikini Island

Rio Pictures MSG 202

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Anthony Markes
Producers Anthony Markes, Zachary Matz Screenplay Emerson Bixby Lead Actors Holly Floria, Alicia Anne, Jackson Robinson, Cyndi Pass 88 minutes
Five women modelling bikinis on a tropical island are picked off by a killer. Gratuitous swimwear posing ensues, punctuated by an irrelevant 'suspense' story. Juvenile fodder with a barely necessary 18 certificate.

Caged Women

Rio Pictures MSG 201

(Country and year unknown)

Certificate 18 Director Leandro Lucchetti
Production Company Film 90 Screenplay Unknown Lead Actors Elena Wiedermann, Christian Lorenz, Isabel Libossart 89 minutes
Unabashed sleaze along the lines of the cult hit *Savage Island*. Innocent women are used for foul sport by rich playboys in a South American jungle prison.

Chopper Chicks in Zombie Town

Troma TP 1002

USA 1989

Certificate 18 Director Dan Hoskins
Producer Maria Snyder Screenplay Dan Hoskins Lead Actors Jamie Rose, Catherine Carlen, Lycia Naff, Vicki Frederick, Kristina Loggia 91 minutes
The best of Troma's recent batch (which isn't saying much) in which the 'Cycle Sluts' meet the living dead. The title outshines the movie, but there are a few grisly laughs.

Crash Landing: Flight 232

Braveworld BRV 10143

USA 1992

Certificate PG Director Lamont Johnson
Producers Bradley Wigor, Joseph Maurer Screenplay Harve Bennett Lead Actors Charlton Heston, James Coburn, Richard Thomas, Philip Baker Hall 88 minutes



Missionary man:
Lothaire Bluteau in
'Black Robe'

Interpolated TV news footage adds authenticity to this straightforward and gripping reconstruction of a DC-10's crash landing in an Iowa cornfield, and the local emergency services' subsequent rescue of survivors from the wreckage.

Delirious

MGM/UA Home Video PEV 52296
USA 1991

Certificate PG Director Tom Mankiewicz
Producers Lawrence J. Cohen, Fred Freeman, Doug Claybourne
Screenplay Lawrence J. Cohen, Fred Freeman
Lead Actors John Candy, Mariel Hemingway, Emma Sams, Raymond Burr 93 minutes
Strained attempt at a comedy vehicle for John Candy. The burly Candy stars as a daytime TV soap writer who contrives to wake up in the fictional community of his hit show *Ashford Falls* - with depressingly overstated consequences.

Feminine Chemistry

Rio Pictures MSG 203

(Country and year unknown)

Certificate 18 Director Brunno Gaburro
Producer Pino Burricchi
Screenplay Antonio Marino
Lead Actors Rosy De Palma, Florence Guerin, D.D. Lazzaro 90 minutes
The softcore packaging conceals a dubbed and doubtlessly retitled big business drama of unspecified European origin. Various parties (unscrupulous lesbian siren, sulky porno actress, doubting nun) battle for power after the death of an ageing industrialist.

Forced March

Pegasus MO 315

USA 1989

Certificate 15 Director Rick King
Producer Dick Atkins
Screenplay Dick Atkins, Charles K. Bardosh
Lead Actors Chris Sarandon, Renee Soutendijk, Josef Sommer, John Seitz 100 minutes
A TV star (Sarandon) confronts his disturbing family past and his own identity as an actor while shooting a WWII holocaust movie in Hungary. Unfortunately the predictable film-within-a-film dominates the intermittently insightful off-screen action.

Fugitive Among Us

Odyssey ODY 323

USA 1992

Certificate 15 Director Michael Toshiyuki Uno
Producer Blue André
Screenplay Gordon Greisman, based on the book *And Deliver Us from Evil* by Mike Cochran
Lead Actors Peter Strauss, Eric Roberts, Elizabeth Peña, Guy Boyd 96 minutes
★ Superior real-life TV drama about a hard-nosed cop (Strauss) who channels guilt over his failing marriage into the obsessive pursuit of a violent rapist. Fine performances from independent-minded victim Peña and Roberts as the slimy prime suspect.

Indio II: The Revolt

FoxVideo 3288

Italy 1990

Certificate 15 Director Anthony M. Dawson (aka Antonio Margheriti)
Producer Filberto Bandini
Screenplay Gianfranco Bucciari, Filberto Bandini
Lead Actors Marvin Hagler, Frank Cuervo, Dirk Galuba, Charles Napier 97 minutes
Part of the seemingly unending cycle of eco-friendly jungle movies.

Former boxing champ Hagler's US sergeant leads Amazonian tribespeople against evil forest-felling developers.

Into the Badlands

CIC Video VHA 1541

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Sam Pillsbury
Producer Harvey Frand
Screenplay Dick Beebe, Marjorie David, Gordon Dawson, based on the stories *The Streets of Laredo* by Will Henry, *The Time of the Wolves* by Marcia Muller, *The Last Pelt* by Bryce Walton
Lead Actors Bruce Dern, Mariel Hemingway, Andrew Robinson, Lisa Pelikan 85 minutes
Western portmanteau linked by the black-clad figure of Dern's bounty-hunter. New Zealand director Pillsbury works hard at bringing atmosphere to the dismayingly thin source material. Genre buffs will want a look.

The Killing Zone

American Imperial AMP 108

USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director Addison Randall
Producer Charla Driver
Screenplay Addison Randall
Lead Actors Daron McBee, James Dalesandro, Melissa Moore, Armando Silvestre 82 minutes
The prison-cell assassination of his brother prompts a spate of revenge slayings on the part of a Mexican narcotics kingpin. Musclemann McBee is released from internment to bring a halt to his activities. Expect the expected and much macho posing.

Lady Dragon

20.20 Vision NVT 16644

(Country Unknown) 1991

Certificate 18 Director David Worth
Producer Gope Samtani
Screenplay Clifford Mohr
Lead Actors Cynthia Rothrock, Richard Norton, Robert Ginty 92 minutes
Leading female martial-arts star Rothrock is bent on revenge after the slaying of her husband. The fight sequences surprisingly lack pace or vigour and the usual explosive sound effects are sadly missing. Rothrock is an endearing heroine but deserves better material.

The Last Hour

Promark HFV 8027

USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director William Sachs
Producer Richard Sawyer
Screenplay Jim Byrnes
Lead Actors Michael Pare, Shannon Tweed, Bobby Di Cicco, Robert Pucci 81 minutes
Cheerful *Die Hard* retread. Pare's cop scales a skyscraper to rescue his ex-wife and her duplicitous accountant husband from the hands of the Mob. Convincing location work makes up for lack of narrative continuation.

The Last Prostitute

CIC Video VHA 1548

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Lou Antonio
Producer Peter Bogart
Screenplay Carmen Culver
Lead Actors Wil Wheaton, David Kaufman, Sonia Braga, Woody Watson 89 minutes
Moralising movie with an attention-grabbing title. Encouraged by a relative, two Southern youngsters look up a famed prostitute only to find that she has retired. The regular repertoire of lessons about life are on offer.

Lost in Time

EV EVV 1222

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Anthony Hickox
Producer Nancy Paloian
Screenplay Anthony Hickox
Lead Actors Zach Galligan, Alexander Godunov, Monika Schnarre, Martin Kemp 100 minutes
★ Originally titled *Waxwork II*, this sequel to Hickox's previous episodic splatter plays more like a fantasy cineaste's *Time Bandits*. After discovering the key to another universe, a couple time-travel in and out of different dimensions. Ramshackle fun with a strong movie pastiche element.

Nails

Medusa MC 379

USA 1992

Certificate 15 Director John Flynn
Producer George W. Perkins
Screenplay Larry Ferguson
Lead Actors Dennis Hopper, Anne Archer, Tomas Milian 95 minutes
A typically rumbustious Dennis Hopper, as a tough cop known as 'Nails', raises the interest level in this routine policier. Troubled relationships and revenge supply a formula plot, but it's the moments of bile and self-loathing in the script that give Hopper a chance to shine.

Pure Luck

CIC Video VHA 1520

USA 1991

Certificate PG Director Nadia Tass
Producers Lance Hool, Sean Daniel
Screenplay Herschel Weingrod, Timothy Harris
Lead Actors Martin Short, Danny Glover, Sheila Kelley, Scott Wilson 92 minutes
★ Disposable, whimsical comedy, flatly directed by Tass (director of the wonderful *Malcolm*) but saved by Short's winning performance. A hard-nosed detective (Glover) traces a missing accident-prone girl with the help of an equally unfortunate stooge (Short).

Secret Games

Medusa MC 377

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Alexander Gregory
Hippolyte
Producer Andrew Garroni
Screenplay Georges Des Esseintes
Lead Actors Delia Sheppard, Martin Hewitt, Michele Brin, Catya Sassoon 92 minutes
'Art-porn' from Hippolyte, featuring his usual trademarks - suspenders, sterile sex-scenes and a perfunctory thriller narrative stuck on at the end. A bored housewife explores her sexual fantasies working in a brothel for millionaires.

Secrets

American Imperial AMP 107

USA 1992

Certificate 15 Director Peter Hunt
Producer Dennis Hammer
Screenplay William Bast, Paul Huson, based on the novel by Danielle Steel
Lead Actors Stephanie Beacham, Christopher Plummer, Linda Purl, Gary Collins 90 minutes
TV adaptation of another pulp-classic by Steel. Lust, deception, drug-abuse and murder thrive behind the scenes of a top TV series.

Shakma

20.20 Vision NVT 16806

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director/Producer Hugh Parks
Screenplay Roger Engle
Lead Actors Christopher Atkins, Amanda Wyss,

Ari Meyers, Roddy McDowall 101 minutes
A drug-testing experiment that goes awry leaves the eponymous baboon to run amok in a medical research institution. A concerned McDowall looks on as the crazed primate murderously disrupts his students.

Strays

CIC Video VHA 1585

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director John McPherson
Producer Niki Marvin
Screenplay Shaun Cassidy
Lead Actors Kathleen Quinlan, Timothy Busfield, Claudia Christian, William Boyett 79 minutes
Desultory feline flick as nice young family move into new country home to be attacked by assorted cats. An extended siege proves about as threatening as a TV cat food commercial.

Street Crimes

American Imperial AMP 106

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Stephen Smoke
Producers Charla Driver, Joseph Merhi, Richard Pepin
Screenplay Stephen Smoke
Lead Actors Dennis Farina, Michael Worth, Patricia Zehentmayr, James T. Morris 95 minutes
LA drug lords become worried when police-organised kickboxing bouts keep too many kids off the streets. A blind daughter sub-plot for Farina weighs the movie down.

Tales from the Crypt: Volume II

Warner PEV 12168

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Directors Tom Holland, Mary Lambert, Howard Deutch
Producers William Teitler, Joel Silver, Richard Donner
Screenplay Michael McDowell, Battle Davis, Randolph Davis, A. Whitney Brown, Fred Dekkar
Lead Actors Lea Thompson, M. Emmet Walsh, Amanda Plummer 84 minutes
★ Three more episodes from HBO's lively horror series, derived from William M. Gaines' 50s comic strip *Haunt of Fears* and *Vault of Horror*. Nightmarish wedding nights, hideously pampered pets and murderous goings-on provide the basis for ghoulish fun and garish giggles.

Retail

Alice

Columbia TriStar CVR 22821

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Woody Allen
★ Naïve Manhattan housewife (Mia Farrow) sets out to discover a new life away from philandering husband William Hurt, aided by magical Chinese herbs. (S&S July 1991)

Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore

Tartan Video/Blue Dolphin BDV 12547

(Laser Disc TVL 004)

USA 1974 Price £15.99

Certificate 15 Director Martin Scorsese
★ Early Scorsese film with the director swapping his usual territory of New York bars for Western roadhouses. Ellen Burstyn is a widow with a small child, who leaves to make a career as a singer and while travelling falls in love with a rancher (Kris Kristofferson). (MFB No. 497) Widescreen

Anchors Aweigh
MGM/UA Home Video PES 50309
USA 1945 Price £10.99
Certificate U Director George Sidney
Similar in plot to the later musical *On the Town*. Sailors Gene Kelly and Frank Sinatra vie for the attention of Kathryn Grayson while singing the songs of Jule Styne. (MFB No. 143)

Autobus (Les Yeux du monde)
Artificial Eye ART 042
France 1991 Price £15.99
Certificate 15 Director Eric Rochant
★ A lovesick young man (Yvan Attal) hijacks a schoolbus to prove his worth to girlfriend Charlotte Gainsbourg, and finds himself caught up in a chase with police. Delightful comedy-drama from the director of *Un Monde sans pitié*. (S&S July 1992) Subtitles Widescreen

The Blue Angel (Der blaue Engel)
Aikman Archive Video JEF 00003
Germany 1930 Price £15.99
Certificate PG Director Josef von Sternberg
★ First and most powerful of von Sternberg's legendary series of films made with Marlene Dietrich. Emil Jannings plays the shy schoolmaster dazzled and enslaved by tawdry nightclub singer Lola Lola (Dietrich). (MFB No. 247) Subtitles B/W German version

Casablanca
MGM/UA Home Video PES 99217
USA 1942 Price £10.99
Certificate U Director Michael Curtiz
★ Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman as the tragic lovers. This anniversary edition includes the original wartime trailer and a documentary narrated by Lauren Bacall. (MFB No. 109) B/W

Cyrano de Bergerac
Fabulous Films FAB 04025
USA 1950 Price £12.99
Certificate U Director Michael Gordon
José Ferrer won an Oscar for his Cyrano in this tale of a lovestruck poet and duellist with an extraordinary large nose. (MFB No. 213) B/W

Dances with Wolves
Guild Home Video GLD 51152
USA 1990 Price £12.99
Certificate 15 Director Kevin Costner
The photography is the star in this overrated Western about a heroic lieutenant who is sent out West. Costner seems more concerned with 20th century liberal values than with the true history of the Frontier. (MFB No. 685)

Dolly Dearest
First Independent VA 30257
USA 1991 Price £10.99
Certificate 15 Director Maria Lease
Derivative puppet slasher-horror. Watch your toy cupboard – it may be by psycho-teddybears next. (Rental premiere, S&S December 1991)

Dressed to Kill
(aka *Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Code*)
Storm Screen Classics SVC 0005
USA 1946 Price £10.99
Certificate U Director Roy William Neill
The last film in the modernised Sherlockian thriller series Basil Rathbone made with Universal Studios. Holmes and Dr Watson chase a gang of counterfeiters. (MFB No. 151) B/W

Eat a Bowl of Tea
Connoisseur CR 087
USA 1989 Price £15.99
Certificate 15 Director Wayne Wang
Serio-comic adventures of a newly married couple in New York's Chinatown. A father (Victor Wong) sends his son off to China to bring back a wife (Cora Miao). Charming but overly sweet. (MFB No. 671)

Eight Men Out
Vision Video VVD 1034
USA 1998 Price £10.99
Certificate 15 Director John Sayles
The story of how the Chicago White Sox conspired to lose the 1919 baseball World Series. Concern for historical accuracy somewhat dilutes the drama. With John Cusack and Charlie Sheen. (MFB No. 666)

Europa
Electric Pictures EP 00015
Denmark 1991 Price £15.99
Certificate 15 Director Lars von Trier
★ A stunning political thriller set in 1945. A young American soldier returns to Germany to discover his roots and finds a web of post-war corruption and chaos. (S&S May 1992) Subtitles B/W & Colour Widescreen

Extase
Aikman Archive Video JEF 00008
Czechoslovakia 1932 Price £14.99
Certificate PG Director Gustav Machaty
★ Because of a skinny-dipping scene featuring the teenage Hedy Lamarr, this pastoral drama about a young woman who marries a wealthy older man caused a scandal – execrated by the Pope, Hitler and Lamarr's husband. *Extase* is presented here in its unexpurgated version. (MFB No. 197) B/W Subtitles

Finian's Rainbow
Tartan Video/Blue Dolphin BDV 12236 (Laser Disc TVL 005)
USA 1968 Price £15.99
Certificate U Director Francis Ford Coppola
★ A young Coppola was given the job of directing this fey Irish musical starring Petula Clark, an elderly Fred Astaire and Tommy Steele as a leprechaun. (MFB No. 417) Widescreen

The First of the Few
Odyssey ODY 738
UK 1942 Price £7.99
Certificate U Director Leslie Howard
★ Centrepiece of Howard's impressive list of contributions to Britain's war propaganda, made just before his death in 1943. Howard plays R.J. Mitchell, inventor of the Spitfire, David Niven his test pilot. (MFB No. 105) B/W

The First Power
Braveworld STV 2135
USA 1990 Price £10.99
Certificate 18 Director Robert Resnikoff
An LA cop (Lou Diamond Phillips) captures the serial 'Pentagram Killer', but despite public execution, his prisoner returns from the dead to haunt him. (MFB No. 681)

Gas-s-s-o or it became necessary to destroy the world in order to save it
Connoisseur CR 081
USA 1970 Price £15.99
Certificate 18 Director Roger Corman
★ An incoherent hippy movie that apparently suffered in the editing room.

A drug is accidentally released, killing anyone over the age of twenty-five. A must for the Love Generation. (MFB No. 480)

Gigi
MGM/UA Home Video PES 50050
USA 1958 Price £10.99
Certificate PG Director Vincente Minnelli
Multi-Oscar winning musical. Louis Jourdan, Maurice Chevalier and Hermione Gingold star with Leslie Caron in this slight Parisian fancy based on the novel by Colette. (MFB No. 302)

Hanussen
Connoisseur CR 088
Hungary/Germany 1988 Price £15.99
Certificate 15 Director István Szabó
A clairvoyant magician is able to foresee the early days of fascism in Berlin and Vienna, in the last of a trilogy of lavish period films made by Szabó for his star Klaus Maria Brandauer. (MFB No. 665) Subtitles

High Society
MGM/UA Home Video PES 50292
USA 1956 Price £10.99
Certificate U Director Charles Walters
Courtng comedy musical with a score by Cole Porter, vaguely inspired by *The Philadelphia Story*. The stars look as though they were cast at random – Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Louis Armstrong and a stiff performance by Grace Kelly. (MFB No. 275)

High Tide
Connoisseur CR 086
Australia 1987 Price £15.99
Certificate 15 Director Gillian Armstrong
In a shabby caravan park, three generations of women struggle with disappointments and responsibilities. Fine actresses Judy Davis, Claudia Karvan and Jan Adele do their best with a soapy script. (MFB No. 659)

The Hunchback of Notre Dame
Aikman Archive Video JEF 00007
USA 1923 Price £14.99
Certificate PG Director Wallace Worsley
★ The original screen version of Victor Hugo's classic story. Lon Chaney made up as hideous hunchback Quasimodo set the standard for all the deformed bellringers of the screen. (MFB No. 495) B/W Silent

Inside Daisy Clover
Tartan Video/Blue Dolphin BDV 11176 (Laser Disc TVL 006)
USA 1965 Price £15.99
Certificate 15 Director Robert Mulligan
Tribulations of a teenage girl who is put through Hollywood's star-making system in the 30s. Despite support from Christopher Plummer and Robert Redford, Natalie Wood fails to convince. (MFB No. 390) Widescreen

JFK
Price £13.99 (see Rental)

Killing Streets
MIA/VPD VIA 7529
USA 1990 Price £10.99
Certificate 18 Director Stephen Cornwell
Michael Pare embarks on a violent rescue mission to free his missing twin brother (Michael Pare again) who is languishing in a foreign jail. (Rental premiere, S&S January 1992)

L.A. Story
Polygram GLD 51132
USA 1991 Price £10.99
Certificate 15 Director Mick Jackson
★ The amorous adventures of a Californian TV weatherman who forecasts his love life by reference to a flashing motorway road sign. Steve Martin mocks LA manners with affection and invention. (S&S May 1991)

The Lunatic
Island World IWCV 1007
USA 1990 Price £12.99
Certificate 15 Director Lol Creme
A scatterbrained Jamaican man is picked up by a sex-mad German tourist. Dispiriting comedy directed by 10CC rock band member Lol Creme. (S&S June 1992)

McCabe and Mrs Miller
Tartan Video/Blue Dolphin BVD 11055 (Laser Disc TVL 003)
USA 1971 Price £15.99
Certificate 15 Director Robert Altman
★ Julie Christie and Warren Beatty try to run a saloon and brothel enterprise in a mining settlement in Montana country. Fine, moody Western. (MFB No. 458) Widescreen

Ma Nuit chez Maud
Connoisseur CR 078
France 1969 Price £15.99
Certificate U Director Eric Rohmer
★ The best of Rohmer's *oeuvre* released on video over the last two years. Jean-Louis Trintignant plays an intellectual Catholic in Clermont-Ferrand, who flirts with the idea of losing his soul with the uninhibited Françoise Fabian. (MFB No. 432) B/W Subtitles

Men at Work
EV EVS 1069
USA 1990 Price £10.99
Certificate 15 Director Emilio Estevez
Estevez co-opts brother Charlie Sheen as his sidekick for a sloppy caper-comedy about two rubbish collectors who find a corpse in a toxic-waste barrel. (MFB No. 685)

Mermaids
Video Vision VVD 1047
USA 1991 Price £10.99
Certificate 15 Director Richard Benjamin
★ Orthodox, kooky family comedy, enlivened by the performances of man-hungry Cher and her difficult daughters Winona Ryder and Christina Ricci. Cher plays a 60s mom who runs away from love until she mets shoe salesman Bob Hoskins. (S&S May 1991)

Metropolis
Aikman Archive Video JEF 00001
Germany 1926 Price £15.99
Certificate PG Director Fritz Lang
★ At 139 minutes, this claims to be the longest surviving version of Lang's epic



Lang's future world – 'Metropolis'

science-fiction classic, which is memorable for its majestic futurist sets and choreographed set-pieces. (MFB No. 507) *B/W Silent*

Miami Blues

Video Vision VVD 1042

USA 1989 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director George Armitage
Made under the supervision of Jonathan Demme – an unsettled, violent story about the love of a simple waitress (Jennifer Jason Leigh) for a hyperactive con artist (Alec Baldwin) who is chased by a seedy cop (Fred Ward). (MFB No. 683)

Out for Justice

Warner PES 12219

USA 1991 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director John Flynn
Tough-guy Steven Seagal arms himself to the teeth and goes out on the streets of Brooklyn for some satisfying vigilante work. (S&S December 1991)

The Pope Must Die

Columbia TriStar CVR 23220

UK 1991 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Peter Richardson
Robbie Coltrane stars as a rock'n'roll priest who is elected Pope by accident, and finds the Vatican in the hands of the Mafia. (S&S August 1991)

Pump Up the Volume

Columbia TriStar CVR 21617

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Allan Moyle
Schoolroom fantasy about a shy but rebellious teen (Christian Slater) who doubles as a heroic DJ of a pirate radio station. (S&S August 1991)

The Quiet Man

Video Collection VC 3398

USA 1952 Price £10.99

Certificate U Director John Ford
★ An Irish-American boxer (John Wayne) returns home to his village in Galway and ends up fist-fighting Victor McLagen and marrying Maureen O'Hara. This 40th anniversary edition includes a documentary on Ford's shooting of the film. (MFB No. 221)

Salmonberries

Electric Pictures EP 00016

USA/Germany 1991

Certificate 15 Director Percy Adlon
★ In a role written especially for her, k.d. lang stars as a strange loner living in Alaska, whose isolation is broken by her encounter with a German émigré librarian (Rosel Zech). (S&S April 1992)

Show Boat

MGM/UA Home Video PES 50167

USA 1951 Price £10.99

Certificate U Director George Sidney
Second version of this musical based on the stage play. Howard Keel, Kathryn Grayson and Ava Gardner do their best in a story about a company of performers who encounter trouble and romance in Mississippi. (MFB No. 210)

Sibling Rivalry

First Independent VA 30255

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Carl Reiner
Inventive corpse-in-the-cupboard comedy in which poor Kirstie Alley's first attempt at adultery turns out to have fatal results. (S&S June 1991)

Singin' in the Rain

MGM/UA Home Video PES 50185

USA 1952 Price £10.99

Certificate U

Directors Stanley Donen, Gene Kelly



Rain dance: Gene Kelly

★ 40th anniversary edition of the much-loved MGM musical, with a new sequence (dropped from the original release) of Debbie Reynolds singing 'You Are My Lucky Star'. (MFB No. 220)

Sleeping with the Enemy

FoxVideo 1871

USA 1991 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director Joseph Ruben
A woman flees her designer home and her violent husband to build a new life but the past catches up with her. Predictable marital-jeopardy thriller with Patrick Bergin and Julia Roberts. (MFB No. 687)

Sunday in the Country

(Un Dimanche à la campagne)

Artificial Eye ART 041

France 1984 Price £15.99

Certificate PG Director Bertrand Tavernier
★ An elderly painter (Louis Ducreux), living in quiet retirement with his housekeeper, is visited by his children – solid citizen Michel Aumont and social butterfly Sabine Azema. A fragile, careful evocation of pre-Grat War France. (MFB No. 607) *Subtitles*

Thelma & Louise

MGM/UA Home Video PES 52355

USA 1991 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Ridley Scott
★ Scott kick-starts the road movie into the 90s with this dazzling female buddy story. Starring Geena Davis and Susan Sarandon. (S&S July 1991)

THX 1138

Tartan Video/Blue Dolphin BDV 11162 (Laser Disc TVL 002)

USA 1970 Price £15.99

Certificate 15 Director George Lucas
★ In his first feature, Lucas gets the chance to reshoot his graduation film with a proper budget and good actors (Robert Duvall, Donald Pleasance, Maggie McOmie). In an antiseptic future world a robotic-human tries to break out after cutting down on the drugs that keep him passive. (MFB No. 450) *Widescreen*

Van Gogh

Artificial Eye ART 040

France 1991 Price £15.99

Certificate 15 Director Maurice Pialat

★ Last and most thoughtful of the three recent cinema representations of the life of the doomed painter, starring the gentle Jacques Dutronc in Pialat's version of the last three months of Van Gogh's life. (S&S May 1992) *Subtitles Widescreen*

Without You I'm Nothing

Electric Pictures EP 00017

USA 1990 Price £15.99

Certificate 18 Director John Boskovich
Sandra Bernhard's film of her musical stage show has her mouthing off about everything from Warhol to gay discos interspersed with imitations of Diana Ross and Madonna. (S&S September 1992)

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

(Ieri, Oggi, Domani)

Aikman Archive Video JEF 00004

Italy/France 1963 Price £14.99

Certificate PG Director Vittorio de Sica
Portmanteau film laboriously designed to offer Sophia Loren three successive roles. The film won an Oscar for Best Foreign Film, but only the photography impresses. With Marcello Mastroianni. (MFB No. 369) *Subtitles*

Retail premiere

The Bat

Aikman Archive Video SUK 26482

USA 1926 Price £14.99

Certificate PG Director/Producer Roland West
Screenplay Julian Josephson, Roland West, based on the stage play by Mary Roberts Rinehart, Avery Hopwood
Lead Actors Tullio Carminati, Jewel Carmen 85 minutes

★ With the earliest known appearance in film of a detective dressed up as a bat, this drawing-room murder mystery (along with its talkie version *The Bat Whispers*, made by West in 1930) is popularly supposed to have inspired the comic-strip character Batman. *B/W Silent*

Dominion Tank Police III & IV

Manga/Island World MANV 1004

Japan 1989 Price £12.99

Certificate 15 Director Takaaki Ishiyama
Producers Kazukiko Inomatu, Tamaki Harada, John O'Donnell, Laurence Guinness
Screenplay Masamune Shirow, Dai Kohno
Animation Hiroki Takagi, Osamu Honda 70 minutes
Further comic-strip street battles for Manga fans – set in the usual mutated future world.

Intervista

RTM/Western Connection WEST 003

Italy 1987 Price £15.99

Certificate 18 Director Federico Fellini
Producer Ibrahim Moustafa
Screenplay Federico Fellini, Gianfranco Angelucci
Lead Actors Marcello Mastroianni, Anita Ekberg, Federico Fellini, Sergio Rubini 105 minutes

★ Fellini's nostalgic celebration of Cinecittà Studio's 50th anniversary is equal parts documentary, autobiography and reverie. The best bit is a reunion of the stars of *La Dolce Vita* at Anita Ekberg's villa. *Subtitles*

M

Aikman Archive Video JEF 00002

Germany 1931 Price £15.99

Certificate 15 Director Fritz Lang
Producer Seymour Nebenzal
Screenplay Fritz Lang, Thea von Harbou
Lead Actors Peter Lorre, Otto Wernicke, Gustav Gründgens, Theodor Loos 118 minutes

★ Lang's first sound film is an atmospheric example of the 'hunt the psychopath' genre, dominated by shadows, buildings and Peter Lorre's chilling performance. *B/W Subtitles*

Project A-Ko

Manga/Island World MANV 1002

Japan 1986 Price £12.99

Certificate 15 Director Katsuhiko Nishijima
Producers Kazufumi Nomura, Naotaka Yoshida, John O'Donnell, Laurence Guinness
Screenplay Katsuhiko Nishijima, Kazumi Shirasaka, Yuji Moriyama, Tomoko Kawasaki 86 minutes

A tale of tearaway teenage super-heroes which is intended as an affectionate parody of the genre but is probably too esoteric except for die-hard fans.

René la canne

RTM/Western Connection WEST 002

France 1977 Price £15.99

Certificate 18 Director Francis Girod
Producers Gerard Crosnier, Luciano Piperino
Screenplay Jacques Rouffio, Francis Girod
Lead Actors Gérard Depardieu, Michel Piccoli, Sylvia Kristel 100 minutes

An obscure film despite its three high-profile stars. A young crook, a middle-aged policeman and a tart enjoy serio-comic adventures during and after the German occupation of France. *Subtitles*

Terror by Night

Storm Screen Classics SBC 0005

USA 1946 Price £10.99

Certificate U Director Roy William Neill
Producer Howard Benedict
Screenplay Frank Gruber
Lead Actors Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce, Dennis Hoey, Alan Mowbray, Frederic Worlock 60 minutes
Holmes and Watson solve a couple of murders on a speeding train. A smartly made mystery better suited to Agatha Christie than Conan Doyle. *B/W*

Retail collection

Laurel & Hardy Shorts

Twice Two/Unaccustomed As We Are/Berth Marks (Tape 1)

One Good Turn/County Hospital/Blotto (Tape 2)

Virgin Vision Archive HR 0053/0054

USA 1929-1933 Price £10.99 each (2 Tapes)

Certificate U Directors James Parrott, Lewis Foster, James W. Horne
Producer Hal Roach
Screenplays Stan Laurel, Leo McCarey, H.M. Walker
Lead Actors Stan Laurel, Oliver Hardy, Thelma Todd, Mae Busch, Paulette Goddard, Billy Gilbert, Anita Garvin 59 minutes (Tape 1)/65 minutes (Tape 2)
Six shorts from the heyday of the Hardy-Laurel partnership, just as their comedy ideas were beginning to aspire to feature length. *Unaccustomed As We Are* was the team's first talkie. The best value of this collection is *Twice Two* in which Laurel and Hardy play themselves as well as their wives. *Colourised*



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Western dominance

From Stephen Teo

In his article 'Hard Boiled' (S&S August), Tony Rayns dismisses as "fatuous" my essay about Bruce Lee (published in the 1992 Hong Kong International Film Festival catalogue). He does so without any supporting arguments. This goes to prove my point that Asian nationalism is an unpopular topic with the group of Western critics, to which Tony Rayns surely belongs, who claim the East as their special field of expertise. Rayns says that my essay was phrased as an attack on Western and gay critics. Actually, it was an attack on two previous essays on Bruce Lee (phrased as an homage to the actor's "narcissism") published by HKIFF catalogue, 1980 and 1984 editions, written by none other than Tony Rayns himself.

I cannot let Rayns' charge, or implication, that I am anti-Western and anti-gay go without refutation. Past experience has taught me that the sort of front-line criticism undertaken by writers such as Rayns is often marred by an inability for objective accounting of Asian works. This may be put down to the 'sudden discovery' mentality which brings about myopic euphoria towards selected works and film-makers. Blinkered, subjective reporting does not give sufficient weight to factors such as inherent differences in cultures. At the same time, there arose a bias towards Western formalistic studies (to which many Asian critics fell prey) which allowed Western experts to express contempt for the importance of linguistic, cultural and nationalistic nuances in Asian works. This led to the myth of oneness or sameness of cinematic culture. Western criticism of Asian cinema was anti-contextual at best, very often based on *pro forma prima facie* manipulations of filmic texts and self-justifications.

One such self-justification for the subjective style-is-best school of Western criticism centres on the belief that sexual behaviour of whatever proclivity is universal. While I do not argue with that, I take issue with those Western critics who attempt to impose Western liberal standards on Asian societies. Such critics bulldoze their standards and norms in a fashion where one has to adopt a politically correct view of sexuality according to the standards and practices in the West. If an Asian critic were to state differing interpretations to the effect that standards and practices in the East may not necessarily be of one with the West, he may be branded a political and social outcast. The situation is exacerbated by the tendency of Western critics to establish clagues – or stables of followers.

Asian criticism is still plagued by the notion that the writings of Western critics on Asia is a practice in "process innovation" while those of Asian critics are really a process of cloning and improvisation of Western methods (to use factory-floor expressions). In other words, Asian critics are doing nothing more than adding bells and whistles to what is fundamentally a Western art form and an exclusive Western field of study. The dominance of Western media and academia does not help the inte-

gration of Western and Asian studies. For a start *Sight and Sound* could publish more writings by Asian critics on Asian cinema (or their interpretations of Western films). Victoria, Australia

● Tony Rayns replies: Despite its somewhat garbled logic and its underlying paranoia, Teo's letter makes a valid point about the imbalance between the East's acceptance of Western film culture and the West's acceptance of the East's. But Teo's recent retreat into a bunker of nationalism does nothing to remedy the situation, and his inability to distinguish between objective disagreements and personal animosities doesn't help either. On questions like my sensitivity to cultural differences and the like, I'm completely happy to stand and be judged by my published writings – although not, of course, by Teo's twisted accounts of them. For the record, my 1980 essay on Bruce Lee was titled 'Narcissism and Nationalism', and it offered what now seems to me an over-indulgent account of the nationalistic thrust of Lee's movies. As for the clear homophobia that runs close to the surface of almost everything Teo writes, that's surely a problem that should be tackled by Hong Kong's Chinese gay-culture activists rather than by me.

Bring back Marlene

From Tim Footman

I have no problem with a Queer Cinema, but I read your feature on the subject (S&S September) the day after I had the misfortune to see the lesbian film *Rosebud* on Channel 4's *Out*. If Queer Cinema means Jarman and Julien, not to mention Rock and Monty and Marlene and Garbo, I'd be delighted to see more. If it means further doses of *Rosebud*, with its bland, coy acting, simplistic tone and fatuous homo-couplings which resemble nothing more than an amusing 'lesbo romp' in *Penthouse*, give me macho hetero crap any day.

London SW2

Representing Britain

From William Phillips

The September issue of *Sight and Sound*, with its ten pages about 'Queer Cinema', has crystallised an unease about the BFI's direction which I should like to ventilate.

I joined the BFI about fifteen years ago, mainly for its library and research facilities (though we may no longer borrow books). I continued to pay a full member's sub in the vague hope that it would help give the poor old British cinema a leg-up. Like other apolitical members, I puzzled over the critical jargon of its publications: all those projects, subversions, deconstructions. I voted for Alexander Walker as governor and hoped Sir Dickie would shame some decent handouts out of the government to keep the cameras turning.

Reviewing the past decade at BFI Production, I am struck by the concentration of investment in features and shorts by and about (a) homosexuals, (b) feminists, (c) 'ethnics', (d) leftist conspiracy pedlars and agitprop merchants in 'workshops', and (e) narcissistic experimentalists who can't tell a story to save their lives. This flow of *recherche* product has come from the division whose predecessor, the Experimental Film Fund, financed prentice works by Ken Russell, John Schlesinger, Lindsay Anderson and Karel Reisz. The latter-day BFI even put

money into film by an Argentine abusing the British.

Being broad-minded and fostering those who find it hard to make a living in the commercial cinema is Doing the Right Thing – laudable up to a point, but that point has been passed. Now that mainstream talents are languishing unemployed, our taxpayer-backed British Film Institute must re-order its priorities.

Contrary to the impression left by BFI Production's slate, 95 per cent or more of the British are white and 97 per cent are heterosexual (the one-in-ten myth is based on garbling of statistics in the Kinsey Report). Judging by the last four general elections, the market for extreme socialist propaganda is limited, too. I do not ask that minority viewpoints be slighted or ignored – just kept in proportion. Once in a true-blue moon we might have a BFI film that acknowledges the calm, kindly, tolerant Britain which foreigners, unprompted, tell me they admire. It would modify the monotonous depiction of a racist, homophobic urban hell exported to festivals and arthouses the world over.

You all think Michael Powell is marvelous, but how are you sniffing out or helping the Powells of today? If BFI Production had found a new Spike Lee, Kenneth Anger or (dare I say it) Leni Riefenstahl, its biases would be more pardonable. But I do not think Isaac Julien, Terence Davies and Sally Potter stand comparison. Nor does publishing a BFI book about *Young Soul Rebels* make it a good movie.

As for the annual New Directors crop of shorts: in three years it has become a byword for politically correct clichés, which will seem as laughable in the future as the worker-worship in GPO documentaries of the 30s. Don't quote awards from obscure festivals as proofs of excellence; everyone knows they are ten a penny. Think box office a bit harder.

Meanwhile *Sight and Sound* could usefully adopt a more robust outlook on some of the BFI's subsidised darlings. For instance, how about a critique of Derek Jarman, saint and martyr, which considers his strain of hysterical self-pity and his propensity to bite the hand of the society that feeds him.

PS: If the BFI must go on commissioning homosexual stuff, let it be about good-looking girls as in Cheryl Farthing's *Rosebud*. We chaps can get quite a kick out of it.

Middlesex

Correction

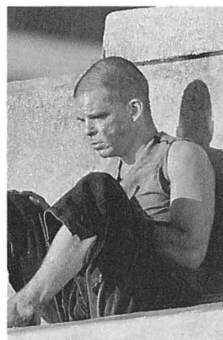
The 1990 section of the production history of *Les Amants du Pont Neuf* which appeared on page 11 of the September issue of *Sight and Sound* should have been headed 1991. The 1990 section should have read as follows. Apologies to David Thompson.

1990

17 March: In *Le Monde*, critic Daniele Heymann interviews Carax, and asserts that the footage she has seen is wonderful and that a saviour for the film must be found.

After complex negotiations with the many parties involved, Fechner now joins the roster of producers, and puts in 55 million FF to complete the film on a strict schedule. Part of this money again goes to necessary restoration work on the set.

28 August: Shooting resumes on the set, and is completed on 22 December. The set is subsequently burnt to the ground.



Missing chronology: down and out in 'Les Amants du Pont Neuf'. See Correction

Teen machines



Benjamin Woolley

As Christmas approaches, the two great Zaiabatsu multinationals of the entertainment-technology world, Nintendo and Sega, have their corporate strategies firmly set on market saturation. Having conquered Japan and the US, they will not rest until well over 80 per cent of adolescent-supporting British households also contain one of their new-generation '16-bit' games consoles. And there is every indication that they will succeed. Growing as exponentially as their market share will be the anxiety that the computer game is becoming a sort of Pied Piper, luring teenagers from their homes into a world of electronic gratification.

The world of Nintendo and Sega is impenetrable to most adults – which is, of course, part of its appeal to non-adults. It confounds basic assumptions about entertainment. Take, for example, Mario, the star character of Nintendo games who next year will be played by Bob Hoskins in the inevitable movie. He is completely unglamorous – a little, chubby plumber wearing overalls and a silly smile. How can Nintendo players, young enough to be his children and likely to disown him if they were, possibly identify with such a creature?

It seems such games express a sort of teenage technophilia, a love not just of machines but of the nerdy values that have

become associated with them. This is all the more mysterious given the diminishing interest shown by teenagers in the area of technology in schools (as revealed by a recent study by a schools' examination board, which showed that fewer students are opting for technology subjects at A-level). They seem to love it when it comes to consuming it, but apparently have no wish to understand it.

Are, then, the anxieties of adults about the popularity of computer-game consoles to be taken seriously? There is little doubting the enthusiasm of youth for new media. Telephones, cinema, ghetto blasters, the Walkman, television: all of these have, in their time, been as popular among teenagers as they have been of concern to parents. The attractions for the one and fears of the other have in each case been the same: absence of supervision, addiction, escapism, passive engagement.

The telephone provides an interesting example. Though hardly a new medium, deregulation in the mid-80s briefly turned it into the perfect environment for teenage entertainment. Party lines were set up by the score to provide telephonic meeting places for bored adolescents. They were soon stamped out, following newspaper reports of astronomical bills and outbreaks of phone sex (surely, one would think, a form of intercourse that Aids-aware parents

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would encourage, on the grounds that it might substitute for the physical sort).

Computer consoles are no different. The same objections are trotted out about children becoming hooked or socially de-skilled. Most of them have survived such risks before, and will survive them again. There's nothing to worry about. It's just another fad. Of course it is. No question.

Is it? The Nintendo and Sega phenomenon does seem to reveal an important shift in attitudes towards technology. For the pre-Nintendo generation, technology is generally regarded as external, alien. For the Nintendo generation, it is intimate, familiar. The Sega advertising campaign demonstrates this in its use of the motifs of cyberpunk, the science-fiction genre of information-age angst. It is concerned with a technology that immerses its subject into an artificial 'cyberspace', that dissolves the boundary layer between human and machine. Players of computer games really do seem to become part of the machine they are playing, enthralled by the action to the extent that the physical interface between hand and joystick, eye and screen, ear and loudspeaker, is forgotten.

Films have sometimes brilliantly captured this shift in attitudes. The *Alien*, *Terminator* and *Robocop* series have all explored it. It is no more effectively symbolised than in the *Alien*'s publicity shot depicting Ripley's cheek almost being kissed by the slaving jaws of the part-organism, part-mechanism that is the alien.

The technology of media is now all about increasing intimacy and impact. Developments into 'digital' television as a successor to the current 'analogue' medium are all aimed at allowing the viewer to engage with the programmes, as players do with their games.

William Gibson, the proto-cyberpunk novelist (and unsuccessful author of one draft of *Alien*?) expressed the fears raised by such developments perfectly in his novel *Count Zero*, in which he writes of people 'doing', rather than just watching, television. One character describes his mother's soap habit '...she'd come through the door with a wrapped bottle under her arm, not even take her coat off, just go straight over and jack into the Hitachi, soap her brains out good for six solid hours. Her eyes would unfocus, and sometimes, if it was a really good episode, she'd drool a little'.

PROFESSOR POTEMKIN'S COMPETITION

The answers to our August quiz 'On the Beach' are: 1. '1 Million Years BC'; 2. 'Long Island'; 3. 'The Green Ray'; 4. 'Blood Beach'; 5. 'We're Not Dressing'; 6. Robert Duval/Colonel Kilgore; 7. Rimini; 8. 'The Long Goodbye'; 9. Death; 10. 'From Here to Eternity'. The prize went to Robert Napthine of Bedford. We much appreciate his scholarly reference to Jules Verne in a footnote to Question 3. I forgot to mention in the last issue that September's prizes of box sets of Andrei Tarkovsky's collection also includes

a video of 'Ivan's Childhood', courtesy of Artificial Eye Video.

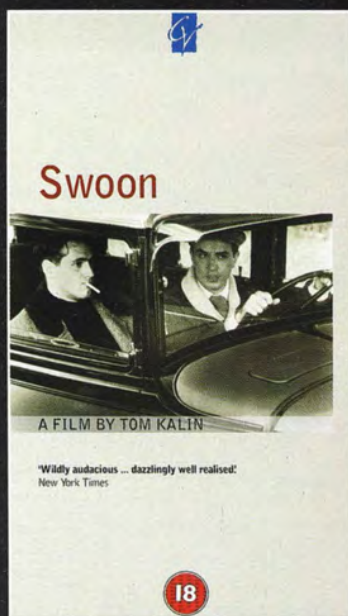
This month's competition is entitled 'Anchors Aweigh'. Send your entries, on a postcard, to Professor Potemkin, Sight and Sound, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL, by 15 October. Three winners will each receive videos of Leos Carax's 'The Night is Young', Stephen Poliakoff's 'Close My Eyes' and Jacques Rivette's 'La Belle Noiseuse – Divertimento'. All these titles are released through Artificial Eye Video at £15.99 each.

1. We saw the Atlantic and the Pacific, but the Pacific wasn't terrific. In which film?
2. In which country's port is 'Das Boot' finally bombed to bits?
3. Who invited Ava Gardner aboard the 'Flying Dutchman'?
4. Who let Shelley Winters drown when they went out together in a rowing boat?
5. In which epic sea-going film did director Michael Curtiz nearly manage to drown hundreds of extras?
6. Name the plucky destroyer in which Noël

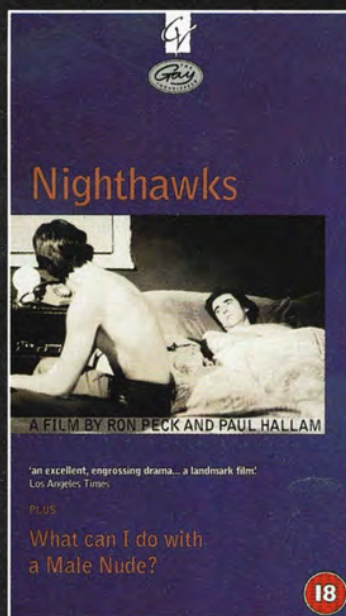
Coward and his crew proudly served.

7. Which Hollywood actor and lifelong sea dog wrote a voyager's autobiography called 'The Wanderer'?
8. What unusual animal is a passenger on the luxury liner in 'E La Nave Va'?
9. One Jack London story set before the mast has been filmed at least eight times. What is the novel's title?
10. Which influential 1925 film was partly shot aboard a vessel called 'The Twelve Apostles'?

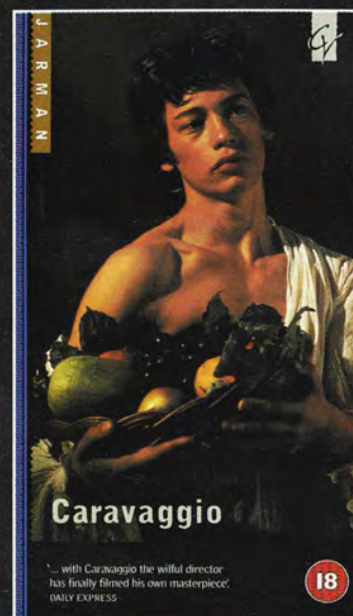
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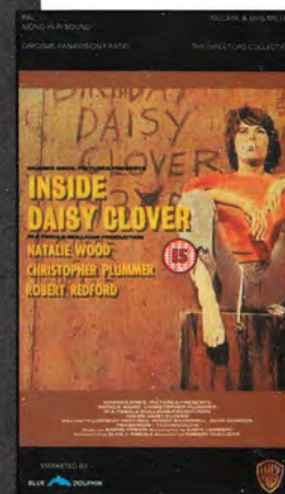
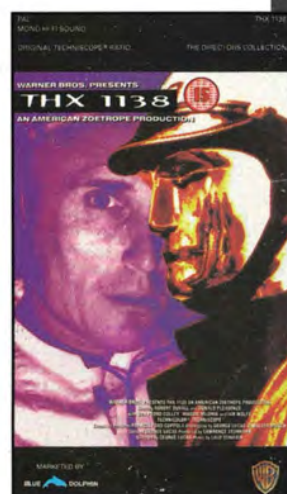
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